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Epochs of History.

EDITED BY

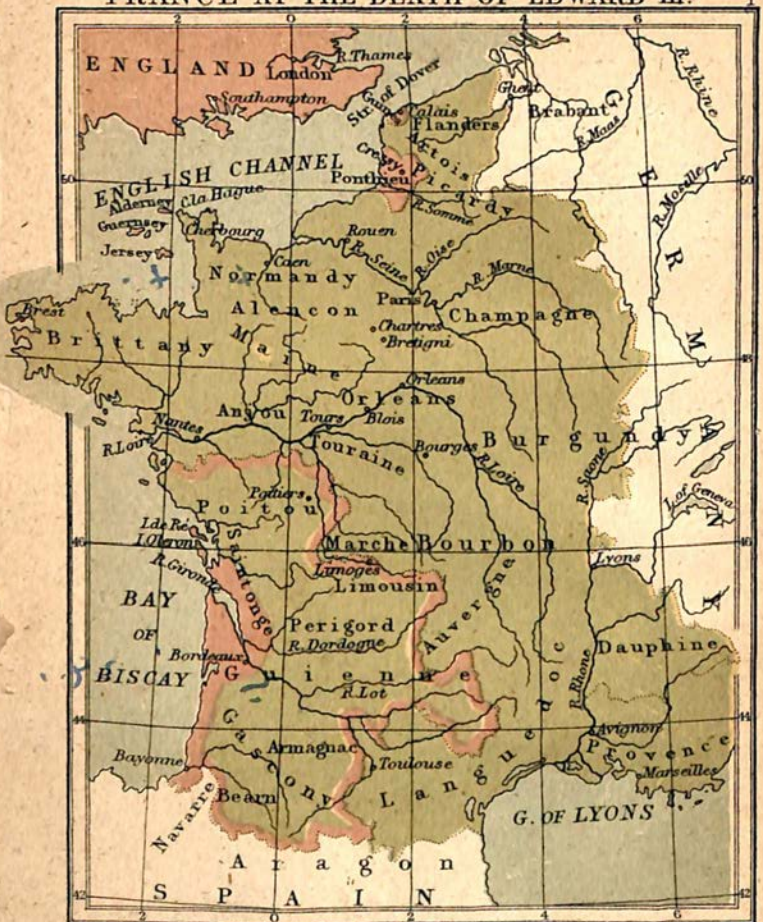
EDWARD E. MORRIS, M.A.

THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK.

JAMES GAIRDNER.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

FRANCE AT THE DEATH OF EDWARD III.



Boundary of English Territory as settled by the Treaty of Bretigni 1360 — Outline Red

London, Longmans & Co. — Edw.d Weller

Do at death of Edward III. — Red

Note

The treaty of Bretigny was made in 1360 between Edward III and King John of France. After it Edward lost the actual possession of nearly the whole South of France, but he never gave up his pretensions to the Sovereignty of Guienne and Gascony.

THE HOUSES

OF

LANCASTER AND YORK

WITH THE

CONQUEST AND LOSS OF FRANCE

35067
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BY

JAMES GAIRDNER

EDITOR OF 'THE PASTON LETTERS' ETC.

SSJ 28.

WITH FIVE MAPS

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PREFACE.

FOR THE PERIOD of English history treated in this volume, we are fortunate in possessing an unrivalled interpreter in our great dramatic poet, Shakspeare. A regular sequence of historical plays exhibits to us not only the general character of each successive reign, but nearly the whole chain of leading events; from the days of Richard II. to the death of Richard III. at Bosworth. Following the guidance of such a master mind, we realise for ourselves the men and actions of the period in a way we cannot do in any other epoch. And this is the more important, as the age itself, especially towards the close, is one of the most obscure in English history. During the period of the Wars of the Roses we have, comparatively speaking, very few contemporary narratives of what took place, and anything like a general history of the times was not written till a much later date. But the doings of that stormy age—the sad calamities endured by kings—the sudden changes of fortune in great men—the glitter of chivalry and the horrors of civil war,

—all left a deep impression upon the mind of the nation, which was kept alive by vivid traditions of the past at the time that our great dramatist wrote. Hence, notwithstanding the scantiness of records and the meagreness of ancient chronicles, we have singularly little difficulty in understanding the spirit and character of the times.

Shakspeare, however, made ample use besides, of whatever information he could obtain from written histories. And there were two works to which he was mainly indebted, which deserve to be read more generally than they are at the present day—the Chronicles, namely, of Hall and Holinshed. Hall's Chronicle was written in the reign of Henry VIII., and gives a complete account of the whole sequence of events from the last days of King Richard II. to the time in which the author wrote. The title of the work prefixed to it by himself, or possibly by his printer Grafton who completed it, was 'The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Families of Lancastre and Yorke.'[1] This expresses exactly the general scope of the book, which traces out very clearly the

[1] The full title is as follows:—'The Union of the two Noble and Illustrate Families of Lancaster and York being long in continual dissension for the crown of this noble realm, with all the acts done in both the times of the Princes, both of the one lineage and of the other, beginning at the time of King Henry the Fourth, the first author of this division, and so successively proceeding to the reign of the high and prudent prince King Henry the Eighth, the indubitate flower and very heir of both the said lineages.'

story of each separate reign, first of the one family and afterwards of the other, winding up with a narrative of the reign of Henry VIII., in whom the blood of both Houses was mingled. The style of Hall, though antiquated, is remarkably clear, graphic, and interesting. The headings that he has prefixed to the several reigns are in themselves no small help to the student to remember their general character. The book is divided into the following chapters :—

'An Introduction into the Division of the Two Houses of Lancaster and York.
'I. The Unquiet Time of King Henry the Fourth.
'II. The Victorious Acts of King Henry the Fifth.
'III. The Troublous Season of King Henry the Sixth.
'IV. The Prosperous Reign of King Edward the Fourth.
'V. The Pitiful Life of King Edward the Fifth.
'VI. The Tragical Doings of King Richard the Third.
'VII. The Politic Governance of King Henry the Seventh.
'VIII. The Triumphant Reign of King Henry the Eighth.'

This table of contents is quite a history in little. The feeling with which Hall wrote is that of a man living under a 'triumphant' king, who, after a century of disorder and civil war occasioned by a disputed succession, had succeeded peacefully to the crown, uniting the claims of the two rival families in his own person and raising his country in the estimation of the whole world by his kingly valour. From the happy and prosperous days of Henry VIII.,—for such they were upon the whole, especially the early part of the reign, when Hall wrote—he looked back

with the eye of an historian upon that epoch of tragedy and confusion, and carefully collected all that he could find relating to it. In the beginning of the work he gives a list of the authorities he had consulted, among which there are one or two that cannot at this day be identified, and perhaps may not be now extant.

On the whole, those who desire to obtain a clear impression of the history of this period cannot do better than read the Chronicle of Hall, of which it is greatly to be desired that some more handy and convenient edition were published for general use. It is, however, for the most part accessible in public libraries, either in the original black-letter edition or in that of Sir Henry Ellis.

The later Chronicles of Stow and Holinshed, published during the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, add many important particulars not to be found in Hall. John Stow was a most industrious antiquary, who spent the greater portion of his life in collecting and taking notes from MSS., and in his Chronicle, or, as he himself calls it, his 'Annals,' he gives the fruit of his gleanings, not in a connected narrative but in a record of events from year to year, as the name of the work implies. The work of Holinshed, on the other hand, is called on the title-page a Chronicle, but is, in fact, a regular history, embodying the substance of

Hall's narrative, sometimes nearly in the words of the earlier writer, with a great deal that is contained in Stow and a large amount of additional information from other sources.

Modern writers have not improved upon these admirable works in extent or fulness of information, though they have undoubtedly brought criticism to bear on many points of detail. Of popular histories written in recent times, Lingard's is upon the whole the most careful and trustworthy ; but any one desiring really to study the period can only refer to such works as a help to rectify and to test the accuracy of his own judgments after saturating his mind with the perusal of earlier authorities. Those who have not an opportunity of referring to Hall or Holinshed, would do well not to take their whole view of the history from any one historian, however accurate he may be, but to jot down the simple facts for themselves, comparing one writer with another to ensure accuracy, and from them form their own conclusions.

If, however, it be desired to examine the original sources from which information about the period is obtained, the student must of course go to earlier writings even than Hall's Chronicle. He must examine the authorities used by Hall himself, and a number of other chronicles and narratives besides, many of which have been only published in compara-

tively recent times. Of these works it would be unnecessary here to give a list; but it is right to say that the present volume has been written from a direct study of all the contemporary testimony that exists relative to the events of each particular reign.

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Errata.

Page 37, line 20, *for* Waynflete *read* Wykeham.
,, 39, last line, ,, Edmund ,, Edward.

LIST OF MAPS.

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EXTENT OF THE ENGLISH CONQUESTS IN FRANCE

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Explanation

△ Indicates a Battle Field.

* Attached to a date indicates that the place was taken, sacked or besieged at that date.

⚓ Indicates an Embarquement.

A more date following the name of a place indicates a treaty or some other point of interest connected with the place which will be found recorded in the history.

A line under the date indicates a remarkable siege as Orleans 1428-9

THE HOUSES

OF

LANCASTER AND YORK.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

THE reign of Edward III. may be considered the climax of mediæval civilisation and of England's early greatness. It is the age in which chivalry attained its highest perfection. It is the period of the most brilliant achievements in war and of the greatest development of arts and commerce before the Reformation. It was succeeded by an age of decay and disorder, in the midst of which, for one brief interval, the glories of the days of King Edward were renewed; for the rest, all was sedition, anarchy, and civil war. Two different branches of the royal family set up rival pretensions to the throne; and the struggle, as it went on, engendered acts of violence and ferocity which destroyed all faith in the stability of government.

Age of Edward III.

2. Even in Edward's own days the tide had begun to turn. Of the lands he had won in France, and even of those he had inherited in that country, nearly all had been lost. Calais, Bordeaux, Bayonne, and a few other places still remained;

Loss of French conquests.

but Gascony had revolted, and a declaration of war had been received in England from Charles V., the son of that king of France who had been taken prisoner at Poitiers. Edward found it impossible in his declining years to maintain his old military renown. His illustrious son, the Black Prince, only tarnished his glory by the massacre of Limoges. Even if England had still possessed the warriors who had helped to win her earlier victories, success could not always be hoped for from that daring policy which had been wont to risk everything in a single battle. The French, too, had learned caution, and would no longer allow the issue to be so determined. They suffered John of Gaunt to march through the very heart of their country from Calais to Bordeaux, only harassing his progress with petty skirmishes and leaving hunger to do its work upon the invading army. England was exhausted and had to be content with failure. During the last two years of Edward's reign there was a truce, which expired three months before his death. But no attempt was made to do more than stand on the defensive.

3. In domestic matters a still more melancholy reaction had taken place. The great King had become weak, and the depravity from which he and his people had emancipated themselves at the beginning of his reign reappeared at the close in a form almost as painful. Alice Perrers ruled the King and sat beside the judges, corrupting the administration of the law. In the King's imbecility his sons conducted the government, and chiefly John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, whose elder brother the Black Prince had, for the most part, withdrawn from public life owing to his shattered health. But just before his death in 1376, the latter, conscious of the corrupt state of the whole administration, gave his countenance

Imbecility of Edward in his later years.

'The Good Parliament.'

to what was called 'the Good Parliament' in attacking the principal abuses. They impeached, fined, and imprisoned various offenders who had been guilty of extortion as farmers of the revenue, or of receiving bribes for the surrender of fortresses to the enemy; then, aiming higher still, not only ventured to complain of Alice Perrers, but compelled the King to banish her from his presence. Unfortunately, the good influence did not last. On the death of the Black Prince everything was again undone. Alice Perrers returned to the King. The Speaker of 'the Good Parliament' was thrown into prison. John of Gaunt returned to power and brought charges against William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, once the all-powerful minister of Edward III., in consequence of which he was dismissed from the Chancellorship and ordered to keep at a distance from the court, while the men who had been censured and condemned by Parliament were released from their confinement.

4. One act, however, the Good Parliament accomplished which was not to be undone. Immediately on the death of the Black Prince the Commons petitioned that his son Richard might be publicly recognised as heir to the throne. The significance of this act is not at once apparent to us who are accustomed to a fixed succession. But the days were not then so very remote when it had been not unusual to set aside the direct line of the succession, either to avoid a minority or for some other reason; and it might have been questioned still whether the right of a younger son, like John of Gaunt, was not preferable to that of a grandson, like young Richard. In this case, however, the general feeling was marked and unmistakeable. The great popularity of the Black Prince made the nation desire the succession of his son; and the unpopularity of John of Gaunt strengthened

Richard, son of the Black Prince, recognised as heir to the crown.

that desire still further. Hence it was that on the death of Edward III. his grandson Richard succeeded quietly to the throne.

CHAPTER II.

RICHARD II.

I. *The French War—Wycliffe and John of Gaunt.*

1. IT was just twelve months after the death of the Black Prince that his father, King Edward III., died at Sheen. A.D. 1377. June 21. According to what had been determined in Parliament, Richard was immediately recognised as king. He was at this time only eleven years old, and could not be expected to discharge the actual functions of government for many years to come. The utmost that could have been hoped under circumstances so disadvantageous was that he might have been placed under such tuition as would have taught him to exercise his high powers with vigour and discretion when he came of age. But even of this the state of parties afforded very little prospect. His eldest uncle, John of Gaunt, was so generally disliked that his influence would not have been tolerated, and no one else had any claim to be his political instructor. No attempt was made to form a Regency or to appoint a Protector during the minority. The young King was crowned within a month after his accession, and was invested at once with the full rights of sovereignty. All parties agreed to support his authority, and seemed anxious to lay aside those jealousies which had disturbed the latter days of the preceding reign. John of Gaunt and William of Wykeham were made friends; and the city of London, which had been much opposed to the former, was assured both of his and of the new King's good will.

Accession of Richard.

2. It was, indeed, a very proper time to put away dissensions, for the French were at that moment harassing the coasts. A week after King Edward's death they burned Rye. A little later they levied contributions in the Isle of Wight, attacked Winchelsea, and set fire to Hastings. About the same time the Scots were busy in the North, and burned the town of Roxburgh. These and a number of other misfortunes were due mainly to the weakness of the government. The French burn Rye.

3. A Parliament, however, presently assembled at London, composed mainly of the same persons as the Good Parliament of 1376. In this Parliament a subsidy was voted for carrying on the war; but to prevent a repetition of old abuses, the control of the money was placed entirely in the hands of two leading citizens of London, who were charged not to allow it to be diverted from the use for which it was intended. The names of these two citizens were William Walworth and John Philipot; and they deserve to be noted here as we shall meet with each of them again in connection with other matters. Parliament.

4. About the end of the year there arrived in England certain bulls—not the first that had been issued by the Pope to denounce his teaching—against John Wycliffe, a famous theologian at Oxford, whose tenets, both political and religious, had created no small stir. Wycliffe denied that the Pope, or any one but Christ, ought to be called Head of the Church. He treated as a fiction that primacy among the Apostles which the Church of Rome had always claimed for St. Peter. He maintained that the power of kings was superior to that of the Pope, and that it was lawful to appeal from the sentence of a bishop to a secular tribunal. It was one of his cardinal principles that dominion was founded on grace, and that anyone who held authority, either temporal or spiritual, Wycliffe.

was divested of his power by God whenever he abused it, so that it then became not only lawful but right to disobey him. This teaching shook to its foundation the view commonly entertained of the relations of Church and State, but it recommended itself in many ways to no small section of the nation. As early as the year 1366 it had become of value to the Court; for the Pope had revived the claim made by the See of Rome for tribute in the days of King John, and while the papal pretensions were repudiated by the Parliament at Westminster, Wycliffe defended in the schools of Oxford the decision come to by the legislature.

5. In truth the authority of the Pope had not been strengthened in the estimation of Englishmen since the days when that tribute had been submitted to, especially not in the days of Wycliffe. For nearly sixty years the Papal See had been removed from Rome to Avignon, and in matters of international concern the Pope was looked upon as a partisan of the French king. Of the six Popes who had reigned at Avignon, every one had been a native either of Gascony or of the Limousin. The exactions of the Papal Court rendered it still more odious. The See of Rome had gradually usurped the right of presentation to bishoprics and prebends, and received the first fruits of each new-filled benefice, of which it endeavoured to make the utmost by frequent translations. At 'the sinful city of Avignon,' as it was called by the Good Parliament, there lived a set of brokers who purchased benefices and let them to farm for absentees. Thus a number of the most valuable preferments were absorbed by Cardinals and other foreigners residing at the Papal Court. And worse than all, the revenues of the English Church went frequently to support the enemies of England. For the Pope claimed a general right of taxing benefices, and

The Popes at Avignon.

when he required money for his wars in Lombardy, or to ransom French prisoners taken by the English, he could always demand a subsidy of the English clergy. The bishops did not dare to resist the demand, however little they might approve the object. In this way the Pope drew from the possessions of the Church in England five times the amount the King received from the whole taxation of the kingdom. And while all this wealth was withdrawn from the country, and some of it applied in a manner opposed to the country's interest, the people were so ground down with taxation that they were unable to provide effectively for defence against a foreign enemy. Statesmen therefore desired the opinion of divines whether England might not lawfully, as a Christian nation, refuse to part with her treasures to the See of Rome. Wycliffe had no doubt upon the subject. He declared that every community had a right to protect itself, and that it might detain its treasure for that purpose whenever necessity required; moreover, that on Gospel principles the Pope had no right to anything at all, except in the way of alms and free-will offerings of the faithful.

6. Unselfish as his aim undoubtedly was, it was only natural that doctrines such as these should have recommended Wycliffe to the favour of the great. Even in the days of Edward III. he was a royal chaplain; and in the very first year of Richard II. his advice was asked by the King's council upon the question just referred to. On the other hand, he was naturally looked upon by churchmen as a traitor to the principles and constitution of the Church; nor could he hope to escape their vengeance except by the protection of powerful laymen. In this respect the friendship of John of Gaunt was of most signal use to him; and it was shown in an especial manner not long before the death of Edward III. On

that occasion Wycliffe had been cited before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London at St. Paul's; and the Duke of Lancaster not only took his part, but befriended him so warmly as to let fall some offensive expressions against the Bishop of London. But he had very soon cause to repent the indiscretion. The Londoners resented either the affront to their bishop or the stretch of authority on the duke's part in protecting a heretic, and it was only at the bishop's own intercession that they refrained from attacking the duke himself or setting fire to his palace of the Savoy.

John of Gaunt.

7. The incident was characteristic of John of Gaunt, a man whose inward endowments, either of virtue or discretion, by no means corresponded with his artificial greatness. Although only the fourth son of King Edward III., he was the eldest that survived his father, and had, as we have already shown, taken the lead in public affairs even during his father's latter days. On the day that Edward attained the age of fifty, he and an elder brother Lionel were raised by the King to the dignity of dukes—a title unknown in England till the beginning of his reign; and having married the daughter of a nobleman, then deceased, who had been created Duke of Lancaster, he was made Duke of Lancaster himself. On the death of his elder brother Lionel, who had been made Duke of Clarence, John of Gaunt was left the only duke in England, and when the Black Prince also died, he was the greatest subject in the realm. But his ambition had not been satisfied even with the great pre-eminence of a dukedom; for, having taken as his wife in second marriage, Constance, the eldest daughter of Peter the Cruel of Castile, he assumed the title of King of Castile. The claim was utterly futile, and served only to exasperate both France and Spain against England. For

Henry of Trastamara, the illegitimate brother of Peter the Cruel, against whose pretensions the Black Prince had won for Peter in Spain the battle of Navarrete, had been since firmly established on the throne by the aid of the King of France. Moreover, at that very time the affairs of England in France were in a most critical condition; yet John of Gaunt, whom his brother the Black Prince had left to defend Aquitaine a year before, returned to England with his newly married wife and empty title just when his presence was most specially wanted in the south of France. After he was gone the English arms experienced a series of reverses ending in the complete loss of Aquitaine, and a new invasion of France, which he undertook in order to retrieve these disasters, was even more unfortunate.

8. Altogether, he had shown little evidence of either military or political capacity; and yet at the commencement of his young nephew's reign his influence was so great by the mere fact of his relation to the King, that everything was at his disposal. It was in vain even that Parliament had committed to Walworth and Philipot the control of the war expenditure. A.D. 1378. The Duke of Lancaster requested that the money granted by Parliament should be placed in his hands, that he might fit out a fleet and drive the enemy from the shores of England. The Lords of the Council, though with great misgivings, felt it necessary to comply. They had little confidence in the duke, but durst not go against his will. Their distrust was justified by the result. The duke was very tardy in his preparations. The fleet at length sailed without him, was encountered by the Spaniards and was defeated. The commercial classes seem to have felt that they must see to the protection of their own interests themselves, for English shipping was exposed to the attacks of various enemies. John Mercer, a Scotch cap-

tain, who was a man of considerable influence with the French king, had been taken at sea by some Northumbrian sailors and committed to the castle of Scarborough. His son, with the aid of a small force consisting of Frenchmen, Scots, and Spaniards, suddenly entered the port of Scarborough and carried off a number of ships. But John Philipot fitted out a fleet at his own expense, which after a short time fell in with the younger Mercer, and not only recovered the ships that he had captured but took him and fifteen Spanish vessels laden with rich booty.

John Philipot.

9. The fame of this achievement made Philipot highly popular, and people could not help contrasting it with the supineness and inactivity of John of Gaunt. When at last the duke set to sea he unfortunately did little to retrieve his past mismanagement, but failed again as he had so often done before. He crossed to Brittany, besieged St. Malo, and so terrified the inhabitants that at first they were disposed to come to terms with him. But the duke insisting on unconditional surrender, the citizens held out and the siege was prolonged, till at length, after losing a number of men, the English were compelled ignominiously to withdraw and return home.

Siege of St. Malo.

10. The war went on for some years languidly, with little glory to England. The national disasters however, together with the intolerable burden of taxation imposed to avert them, had a most important effect in stimulating Parliament to inquire into the expenditure, a claim which was not yet conceded to them by right, but under the circumstances could not be refused. The English also were deceived in their expectations of aid from the Duke of Brittany against France. John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany, had done homage to Edward III. for his duchy, and had been assisted by Edward against his rival Charles of Blois,

Parliament inquires into the expenditure.

supported by the King of France. His son John, who was now duke, with an undisputed title, had fought side by side with the English, and since Richard's accession had been placed in command of a portion of the English fleet. But he had pursued a double game from the first, and being recalled to his duchy, by the earnest entreaties of his people he soon afterwards made a treaty with France to dismiss the English from his dominions.

11. Meanwhile, events had taken place at Rome which affected both the political and religious condition of every country in Europe. Gregory XI., the last of the Popes who reigned at Avignon, had felt it necessary to remove to Rome in order to prevent the Romans setting up an anti-Pope. At Rome he died the year after his removal. Three quarters of the Cardinals in the imperial city were French, but another French pope they did not dare elect. Their choice fell upon a Neapolitan, the Archbishop of Bari, who assumed the title of Urban VI. But shortly afterwards a portion of the Cardinals, pretending that the election had not been free, caused a new election to be made of Robert of Geneva, Cardinal of Cambray, who took the title of Clement VII., and once more set up a papal court at Avignon. Such was the beginning of what is known in history as THE GREAT SCHISM. While Urban was recognised as Pope by England, Germany, and the greater part of Europe, Clement was regarded as head of the Church by France, Spain, Scotland, and Sicily. Religion was mixed up with the political animosities of nations, and crusades against the Clementines, as they were called, were proclaimed as if they had been directed against infidels. Nor was the breach in the Church repaired until thirty-seven years after it began.

A.D. 1378.

The Schism in the Papacy.

II. *Wat Tyler's Rebellion.*

1. In June 1381 there broke out in England the formidable insurrection known as Wat Tyler's rebellion. The movement seems to have begun among the bondmen of Essex and of Kent, but it spread at once to the counties of Sussex, Hertford, Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk. The peasantry, armed with bludgeons and rusty swords, first occupied the roads by which pilgrims went to Canterbury, and made everyone swear that he would be true to King Richard and not accept a king named John. This, of course, was aimed at the government of John of Gaunt, who called himself King of Castile, and to whom the people attributed every grievance they had to complain of.

A.D. 1381. June.

Wat Tyler's rebellion.

2. The principal, or at least the immediate cause of offence, arose out of a poll-tax which had been voted in the preceding year, in addition to other sources of revenue, for the war in Brittany. A poll-tax of fourpence a head had already been levied in the year 1377; but this time the deficiency in the exchequer was so great that three times the amount was imposed. Every person above fifteen years of age was to contribute three groats to the revenue; but to make the burden as equitable as possible, it was enacted that the rich should contribute for the poor, no one (except beggars, who were exempted) contributing less than one groat or more than sixty. When, however, the first collection was made, which should have brought in two-thirds of the whole amount, it was found not to have yielded so much as the former poll-tax. Commissions were accordingly issued to inquire in what cases the tax had been evaded.

The poll-tax.

3. The investigation was one that could not have been

conducted with too great delicacy; but the manner in which the commissioners discharged their functions was offensive beyond measure. Even without very special provocation, there was at this time a dangerous spirit among the lower orders. The condition of the peasantry had for a long time been steadily improving. The great plague which desolated England in the year 1348 had so thinned the population that agricultural labour was much less easily procurable than it had been before; and as wages had risen about one-half, those compulsory services which bondmen were still obliged to render to their lords, such as tilling his fields or carrying in the harvest, were submitted to with far less good-will. A feeling had spread far and wide that bondage was a thing essentially unjust; and with this grew up an intense hatred of the lawyers and of the laws which kept men in subjection.

Condition of the peasantry.

4. The commissioners, however, set about their inquiries in a way which was not only calculated to give needless offence, but which was in many cases indecent and revolting. They soon found the whole peasantry of Kent and Essex banded together to withstand them. From village to village they mustered in hosts, putting to death all lawyers and legal functionaries, and destroying the court-rolls of manors which contained the evidences of their servile condition. And so in overpowering numbers they proceeded to Blackheath, where they are said to have mustered 100,000 men. Their leader was a man of Dartford, named from his occupation Wat the Tyler, whose daughter had been subjected to insulting treatment by the commissioners, and who had avenged the indignity by cleaving the collector's head with his lathing-staff. They had also with them a fanatical priest named John Balle, whom they had liberated from Maidstone jail, where he had been con-

Muster upon Blackheath.

fined by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This man had been notorious for many years for the extravagance of his preaching, in which, however, he addressed himself to the popular prejudices, and seems in part to have adopted the teaching of Wycliffe. Letters written by him in a kind of doggrel rhyme were dispersed about the country. At Blackheath he addressed the multitude in a sermon beginning with what was then a popular saying—

When Adam *dalf* and Evè span,
Who was then a gentleman?

From which he proceeded to point out the injustice of servitude and the natural equality of men.

5. The appearance and numbers of the insurgents were so formidable that the King, although he had gone down the river in his barge to meet them and learn their demands, was counselled not to land. The multitude accordingly passed on through Southwark into London, destroying the Marshalsea and King's Bench prisons. The lord mayor and aldermen at first resolved to shut the gates of the city against them; but they had so many friends within, that the attempt to do so was in vain. When they came in they showed their hostility to John of Gaunt by setting fire to his magnificent mansion, the Savoy Palace. They also burned the Temple and broke open the Fleet prison and Newgate, liberating all the prisoners. At the same time their motives seem to have been free from dishonesty. Strict orders were given against theft, and one fellow who was detected purloining a piece of plate at the burning of the Savoy, was hurled by his comrades into the flames along with the stolen article.

The Savoy palace burned.

6. The King had removed for security into the Tower, along with his mother the Princess of Wales, once popularly known as 'the Fair Maid of Kent.' Two leading members of his council were with him, Simon

Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was then Lord Chancellor, and Sir Robert Hales, Prior of the Knights of St. John, who filled the office of Lord Treasurer. To the Tower also, as a place of safety, flocked many of the citizens. But as the insurgents so strongly insisted on laying their grievances before the King himself, Richard agreed to go out and meet them at Mile End, where they preferred to him certain requests, of which the principal was for a general abolition of bondage. This and their other demands the King felt it necessary to concede, and a charter was granted accordingly under the great seal. The charter was revoked after the insurrection was quelled; but it satisfied the assembly at the time, and the men of Essex took their departure homewards. Another party of the insurgents, however, under Wat Tyler himself, had at this very time forced an entrance into the Tower, and after conducting themselves with the greatest insolence towards the King's mother and her attendants, dragged out the Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir Robert Hales, and beheaded them on Tower Hill. The garrison within the Tower seem to have been utterly paralysed. The irruption of such an unclean and disorderly mob into the fortress seems altogether to have taken away their courage. At the same time many other decapitations took place, both on Tower Hill and in the city; and, as if to show that no restraints would be regarded, men were dragged out of churches and sanctuaries to be beheaded in the public streets.

The Archbishop of Canterbury murdered.

7. But though for the time absolute masters of everything, the triumph of the insurgents was shortlived. For the very next day, Wat Tyler had a conference with the young King at Smithfield, at which he displayed so much insolence that William Walworth, who was this year Mayor of London, killed him

Death of Wat Tyler.

with a blow of his sword. A cry immediately rose from the assembled multitude:—'Our captain is slain. Let us stand together and revenge his death.' Bows were bent and arrows were about to be aimed at the King and his attendants. But Richard, who was at this time only in his fifteenth year, exhibited in the crisis the spirit of a true Plantagenet. Putting spurs to his horse he rode right into the midst of the rebels, and said to them, 'What, my friends, would you shoot your king? Do not grieve for the death of that traitor. I will be your captain and leader. Follow me, and you shall have whatever you please to ask.' This boldness had a marvellous effect. The multitude, disconcerted, followed their young king into the open field. Still, it was doubtful whether they would kill him, or accept a pardon and go home, when fortunately there came from the city a band of volunteers hastily collected under Sir Robert Knolles, an experienced captain in the wars of Edward III., which surrounded the insurgents and placed the King in safety.

8. This gave a fatal blow to the rebellion in London. The insurgents dispersed and went home, and the King conferred on William Walworth the honour of knighthood and land of the value of 100*l.* But out of London there had been at the same time a general rising over all the country, extending even to the county of Norfolk, and northwards to the Humber. At St. Alban's the bondmen of the monastery committed many outrages, demanding emancipation from the abbot. In Suffolk the movement was kept up by a priest named John Wraw, sent down by Tyler from London; and, as in London, houses were destroyed and lawyers everywhere beheaded, including even one of the justices. The prior of Bury too was put to death, and his head stuck upon the pillory.

Commotions in the country.

9. In Norfolk there was a rising under one John

Litster, a dyer of Norwich, whose surname, like Tyler's, denoted his occupation; for 'litster' was old English for a dyer. Here the insurgents proposed to take the Earl of Suffolk by surprise and make use of his name as their leader; but the earl, being warned while he was at supper, made his escape and fled in disguise to the King. The insurgents, however, compelled one nobleman and some knights to go along with them, putting one to death who declared plainly his disapproval of their proceedings. Litster assumed the title of 'king of the commons,' compelled the knights to serve him at table with meat and drink, and sent two of them up to London in company with three of his men, to obtain for the risers charters of manumission and pardon from the King. The knights set out, but were met before long by Spencer bishop of Norwich, a young and warlike prelate, who, having got news of the insurrection, was armed to the teeth, with a few attendants. The bishop demanded of the knights whether they had not some of the traitors in their company; on which the knights delivered up their custodians, whom the bishop caused at once to be beheaded. He then hurried onwards into Norfolk, where the gentry flocked to his standard, and defeated the insurgents in a regular battle at North Walsham, which put an end to the disorders in the county of Norfolk.

Bishop Spencer of Norwich.

10. The spirit which animated all of these commotions was of a kind that naturally spread the greatest possible alarm through all but the lower ranks of society. Nothing like it is to be seen at an earlier date, nor even very much later. The rebellion of Jack Cade, which occurred nearly seventy years after, did not affect a democratic character or a positive hatred of law; though in this respect Shakespeare has mixed up

Spirit of the rebellion.

the features of both movements in describing the rebellion of Jack Cade. The insurgents under Wat Tyler were, as we have seen, bondmen clamouring for emancipation and journeymen artificers who believed in the natural equality of men. The names of their leaders bespoke their plebeian origin, which they made no effort to disguise. They were Wat the Tyler, and Jack Straw, and John Wrawe, with John Litster in Norfolk. These men and their doings are pithily described by the contemporary poet Gower in some Latin verses, of which Fuller, the Church historian, gives the following spirited translation :—

Tom comes thereat when called by Wat, and Simon as forward we find ;
Bet calls as quick to Gibb and to Hykk, that neither would tarry behind.
Gibb, a good whelp of that litter, doth help mad Coll more mischief to do,
And Will he doth vow, the time is come now, he'll join with their company too.
Davie complains, whiles Grigg gets the gains, and Hobb with them doth partake,
Lorkin aloud, in the midst of the crowd, conceiveth as deep is his stake.
Hudde doth spoil whom Judde doth foil, and Tebb lends his helping hand,
But Jack, the mad patch, men and houses doth snatch, and kills all at his command.

However they might profess social equality as their doctrine, these men practically insisted, not upon equality, but on changing places with their masters. In this same poem of Gower's, which he called the *Vox Clamantis*, he likened the whole movement to a rising of asses that suddenly disdained the curb, and oxen that refused the yoke. Changing their natures, they became lions and fire-breathing monsters, and forgot entirely their original characters.

11. It was in the beginning of the year following these

insurrections that the young King, having just attained the age of fifteen, married Anne, the sister of Wenceslaus VI., king of Bohemia, daughter of the last Emperor of Germany, Charles IV. On the eve of his marriage he granted a general amnesty to all but the leading insurgents, which was politically set forth as having been conceded at the request of his future queen. At the same time strong measures were taken, and commissions sent out to repress and punish any future movements of the like description, which were only too likely to arise from the lenity displayed on this occasion. For, in point of fact, the evil influence of the rebellion was palpable for many years afterwards. Government was unhinged and authority was effectually weakened. John of Northampton, the mayor who succeeded Walworth, pursued a very different line of policy from his predecessor; and the city of London, influenced by Wycliffe's teaching, usurped episcopal rights in dealing with offenders against morality. Two years later the same John of Northampton raised factious disturbances in the city in opposition to another lord mayor, and being convicted of sedition before the King, was banished into Cornwall.

A.D. 1382. January. The King's marriage.

III. *The Crusade in Flanders—The Invasion of Scotland—The King's Favourites.*

1. At this time a revolution took place in Flanders which had a special interest for Englishmen. The people of the Low Countries were always well affected to the English, with whom they were united by commercial interests; but the Counts of Flanders favoured France. In the days of Edward III., the Flemings under James Van Artevelde, had for some time thrown off allegiance to their count and openly allied themselves with England.

Philip Van Artevelde.

And now under the guidance of Philip Van Artevelde, the son of their former leader, they in like manner rose against Count Louis II., who was driven out of Ghent, first to Bruges and afterwards into France. The King of France, Charles VI., who had succeeded his father since Richard came to the throne in England, was only a boy; but his guardian, the Duke of Burgundy, was son-in-law of Count Louis, and a French army, led by the young King himself, soon marched into the Netherlands. Artevelde, on the other hand, sought the support of England; and it was so manifestly the interest of England to avail itself of Flemish sympathy against France, that the success of his application might almost have been supposed a matter of course. The English Council, however, were lukewarm and dilatory; and, while Philip Van Artevelde was besieging Oudenarde, he found himself obliged to turn aside and give battle to the French, unaided by any but his own countrymen. The Flemings, though strong in numbers, were deficient in cavalry, and were defeated by the French in three several engagements, in the last of which, the battle of Roosebeke, Van Artevelde was slain.

A.D. 1382.

2. So great a triumph to France—so complete an overthrow to allies like the Flemings—created serious alarm in England for the safety of Calais. A great opportunity had been lost; but could anything be done even now? The question was anxiously discussed in Parliament, and it seemed there was still one effective mode of punishing the pride of France. Papal bulls had arrived in England authorising the warlike Bishop of Norwich to proclaim a crusade against the adherents of the anti-Pope Clement, which would enable the English to carry on war with their old enemy under the colour of religion. The project on the whole gave satisfaction; it received the sanction of

Crusade of the Bishop of Norwich.

Parliament, and people came flocking in great numbers to the bishop's standard. One point only occasioned some little difficulty in point of principle. Although the French were Clementists, the Count of Flanders and his native followers adhered to Pope Urban. But the bishop had engaged beforehand that if the religious pretext would not serve the purposes of England, he would furl the banner of the cross and display his own. He accordingly crossed over to Calais and without even declaration of war succeeded in taking possession of Gravelines, Dunkirk, and a few places near the sea coast of Flanders. A.D. 1383. But after laying siege unsuccessfully to Ypres he found it necessary to withdraw once more to Gravelines, surrender the places he had taken, and finally return to England after razing Gravelines to the ground. The result of the expedition was humiliating enough; but when Parliament met soon after, worse things were discovered. Money had been received from the enemy for the evacuation of Gravelines, and imputations of corruption were made against the bishop himself. This was a charge from which he succeeded in clearing himself, but it was fully proved against several of the captains; and even the bishop did not escape severe censure and punishment for his conduct of the expedition. His temporalities were seized by the King and the offending captains were imprisoned. Nevertheless the bishop retained the goodwill of many who admired his spirit, and in their partiality put a more favourable construction on his conduct than the facts would fairly warrant.

3. The King at this time, though still under age, was not, strictly speaking, kept in tutelage. He had been crowned within a month after the death of his grandfather, and with that great act of State the full rights of sovereignty had devolved upon him. But the fact that he was without a guardian only kept him more completely

under the practical control of the Council, who were responsible to Parliament. As he grew up, this control became more and more distasteful to him, and he showed a disposition to seek counsel from men of his own choosing. More especially he was impatient of the authority and influence claimed by his uncle, John of Gaunt, whose ambition was believed to aspire to the crown itself. Distrust and suspicions arose between uncle and nephew, which the King's mother strove in vain to abate. The Duke of Lancaster being summoned to a council came with a number of armed men, saying that he had been warned of a plot to entrap him. Shortly afterwards the King invaded Scotland with the Duke in his company, laid waste the country as far as the Forth, and burned Edinburgh. Lancaster then advised the King to go further and cross the estuary into Fife. The Scots, in fact, following their usual policy, had retired before the invading army and left even their towns an easy prey to the English, who had destroyed and wasted all they could, but still could not find their enemy. But the Duke of Lancaster's advice was the most impolitic that could have been given, and might well have justified a suspicion that he was acting treacherously, if it were not that he had already in times past given ample evidence of his utter incompetence as a general. Richard, though not himself over-discreet at all times, was too wise to follow the advice. He told his uncle that he might conduct his own men where he pleased, but as provisions failed them where they were, the royal army would certainly return to England.

Invasion of Scotland. A.D. 1385.

4. It was perhaps with a view to counterbalance the great authority of John of Gaunt, who was at this time the only duke in England, that Richard now raised his two other uncles, hitherto Earls of Cambridge and Buckingham, to the dignity of dukes.

The King's uncles.

The former was made Duke of York, the latter Duke of Gloucester. The characters of these two brothers were very different. Except a sense of responsibility to the reigning power, whatever it might be, we fail to see anything very remarkable in that of the Duke of York. But the younger brother, Gloucester, was an active and ambitious prince who very soon made his influence felt to an extent that John of Gaunt never had done. Richard also at the same time bestowed honours and titles on two other persons who were invidiously pointed at as favourites, and who were believed, justly or unjustly, to exercise over him an influence injurious to the general weal.

5. The first of these was Michael de la Pole, not a man of noble lineage, but the son of a wealthy merchant at Hull, who in the days of Edward III. had most patriotically lent the King enormous sums of money which were never truly repaid him, though by Edward's own confession they had been the means of averting great national calamities. William de la Pole, however, had received grants from the crown of various lands and offices, and also the honour of knighthood. Michael, his son, had served in the French wars under Henry, Duke of Lancaster, and more recently under the Black Prince. His merits, even as an administrator, were certainly detected long before young Richard was of age to recognise them; for in the very first year of the reign he was appointed an admiral, and went to sea with John of Gaunt. A few years later the care of the King's household was by Parliament committed to him and to the Earl of Arundel. Finally, in 1383, he was appointed Chancellor. So far he had risen without any personal help from Richard; and, to all appearance, the integrity of his political career fully justified his promotion. But even by the probity of his administration he had made some enemies, and he had criticised very severely the conduct of the warlike

Michael de la Pole.

Bishop of Norwich. This was unfortunate, for the bishop was a popular favourite. The expedition to Flanders, it was commonly believed, had failed only from the selfishness of John of Gaunt and the misconduct of others at home. The punishment imposed upon the bishop only raised him all the more in the esteem of the public, and De la Pole received little thanks for having been instrumental to his disgrace.

6. The other person to whom we have alluded was Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a young man like the King himself, and one who owed his position at court, not to natural ability like De la Pole, but to his ancestry. The office of Lord High Chamberlain had been hereditary in the family of Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford, since the days of Henry II. This office brought him near the King's person, and whether it was due to mental endowments or only to superficial accomplishments Richard showed great partiality for his company. Accordingly, when the King had promoted in honour his two uncles and his Chancellor, he determined that the Earl of Oxford should not be passed over. He created him Marquis of Dublin—a new dignity, for till now there never had been a marquis in England—and the young man, to the envy of all the peerage, took precedence of every one not of the blood royal. With this honour was accompanied a gift of the whole land of Ireland, which it was intended that he should rule and bring into subjection; and next year, to make his title correspond with his domain, the King created him Duke of Ireland.

The Earl of Oxford.

7. His moral qualities, certainly, did not entitle him to so much honour; for notwithstanding his influence over the King, his character was in some things greatly inferior to that of Richard himself. Among all the charges brought against Richard the purity of his married life has never been assailed. The warmth of his domestic

affection seems to have preserved him from those vices in which kings are but too easily led to indulge. The Duke of Ireland, on the other hand, as his fortunes rose, threw off the restraints both of morality and prudence. Although he had married Philippa, daughter of Ingram de Coucy, Duke of Bedford, and was thus allied to the blood royal, he fell in love with a German lady who came over in the Queen's suite. By the influence of his position he was enabled to obtain at Rome a divorce from his wife, and to marry this lady. His own mother, grieved at his conduct, took the divorced woman into her house. The Duke of Gloucester was specially indignant at the insult offered to the royal family. It exhibited in a most painful light the ascendancy gained over the mind of the King by mere personal predilection, and the little regard he felt for more aged advisers of his own blood and lineage. The Duke of Ireland was supposed by some to be the absolute governor of the kingdom, and years afterwards it was said, though untruly, that the King listened to none but young and inexperienced counsellors.

IV. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution.*

1. If it was disagreeable to Richard to submit to the influence of John of Gaunt, he soon found that he could be subjected to still greater tyranny when that influence was removed. The year after the Scottish campaign the Duke of Lancaster sailed into Spain with a great fleet to make good his title to the kingdom of Castile. He was aided by the Pope, who, as the Spaniards were Clementists, granted indulgences to all who joined the expedition, and he did not return to England till three years after. In his absence his youngest brother, Thomas Duke of Gloucester, immediately stepped into the place that he

A.D. 1386. John of Gaunt goes to Spain.

had occupied, and not having Lancaster's mistakes to answer for, soon became a general favourite with the people.

2. At this time very great alarm was caused in England by preparations made by France to invade the country.

Intended French invasion.

Not only were large bodies of troops assembled and a great fleet collected at Sluys, but an extraordinary apparatus had been constructed, in the shape of a moveable wall of wood, with towers at short intervals, which it was proposed to carry over the sea with the invading army and set up as a temporary fortification for any place they might succeed in taking. So great was the terror inspired by these preparations that the Londoners themselves were not without serious apprehension that the enemy might one day be seen unexpectedly at their gates; and the Chancellor, De la Pole, now Earl of Suffolk, caused large musters of men to be taken in the country within easy reach of the capital, that they might be ready when called for. But the danger shortly afterwards passed away. Some French vessels were taken at sea in which part of the wooden wall was found by the English; and it was set up at Sandwich as a bulwark against that very enemy for whose use it had been intended. The French King had 200 ships collected at Sluys, but the plan of the expedition was too cumbrous, and after putting off for three months from one cause or another, the wind became unfavourable and the season was too late to cross the Channel. The alarm in England then subsided, but it was remembered, to Suffolk's prejudice, that it was he who had caused those levies of troops in the neighbourhood of London which had eaten up all the food of the people and oppressed the inhabitants almost as if they had been enemies.

3. Meanwhile a Parliament had assembled in London.

The immediate danger had not yet passed away, but the feeling of alarm was mingled with a sense of indignation. How came it that an enemy like the French, whom Englishmen had so often fought in their own country, were now able to inspire England with terror? What a change since the days of King Edward III. and the Black Prince! Whose fault could it be that no one went to fight the ships at Sluys and to disturb the enemy's preparations? The Parliament felt very much inclined to censure those who had been entrusted with the administration, and sent a deputation to the King at Eltham, stating that they desired to treat of certain matters touching the Earl of Suffolk, which could not be properly discussed while he remained Chancellor. The King was indignant at this attempt to remove a minister of whose merits he himself had a high and apparently well-founded opinion. He returned a haughty and imprudent answer, saying that he would not at the suggestion of Parliament dismiss the meanest valet of his kitchen, and he forbade them to say anything more on the subject. The Parliament, however, refused to proceed with any other business till their request was granted, and Richard was obliged to yield. Suffolk was dismissed from the office of Chancellor and impeached in parliament. Disgrace of Suffolk. Of the charges brought against him the gravest was that he had misapplied money granted for the defence of the kingdom and disobeyed ordinances of the preceding Parliament; but of these points he was in effect acquitted, as it was considered that his fellows in the King's council were no less answerable for them than himself. To the others which accused him of enriching himself unduly by grants from the Crown his answers were declared insufficient. He was accordingly condemned to forfeit all that had been granted to him by the Crown, and to be imprisoned during the King's pleasure.

4. The disgrace of Suffolk, however, was only intended to clear the way for a new scheme of government devised by the ambition of Gloucester. On the plea that the Crown revenues were wasted by mismanagement, a commission of regency was demanded, by which it was virtually proposed to deprive the King of all authority whatever, from that time forward. To terrify him into compliance, the Commons sent for the statute by which Edward II. had been deposed, and a friend of the Duke of Gloucester represented to him that if he obstinately resisted, it would endanger his life. Under these circumstances Richard only contended for the control of his own household by the nomination of his own steward, and that the powers of the commission should not continue more than one year, unless renewed by Parliament. Eleven lords and three great officers of state were then named to carry on the government, with full power to examine into the accounts of the treasury, to enquire into past abuses, and to administer justice where grievances could not be redressed by the common law. In short, the power of the commissioners was to be absolute, and while it lasted the King's authority was to be extinguished; yet, to prevent the smallest attempt being made to undermine their authority, the King was compelled to give his assent to an enactment that whoever counselled opposition to the new regency should be liable, for the first offence, to imprisonment with forfeiture of his goods, and for the second, to the loss of life or limb.

Commission of regency.

5. The King at the close of the session was bold enough to make a personal protest in Parliament against anything that had been done contrary to the prerogatives of the Crown. He was at this time nearly twenty years of age, and a tame submission to enactments so very stringent would have sacrificed his authority for ever. To emancipate himself he took counsel with the Duke of

Ireland, who for some time delayed his departure for that country which he was to govern. After Easter the duke at length made arrangements for his going, and the King, leaving London along with him, accompanied him into Wales. But the duke had no intention yet to cross the Channel. On the contrary, the journey had been arranged that the King might take counsel undisturbed, not only with him, but also with some others, such as the Earl of Suffolk, the Archbishop of York, and Sir Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice of England. This Tresilian was a severe but undoubtedly sagacious judge. He had been appointed Chief Justice at the time of Wat Tyler's rebellion, when his predecessor was slain by the rioters. Men were at that time so terrified by what had passed, that juries showed great unwillingness to indict; and at St. Alban's, where the insurgents had been peculiarly violent, one jury refused. But Tresilian, warning them that they would endanger their own lives by a verdict against the evidence where the facts were so well known, at length got them to find a true bill against the rioters, which being obtained, he procured two other juries to give answer on the same cases exactly in agreement with the verdict of the first. By this means the offenders were at length brought to justice, and a wholesome fear of the law was re-established. But Tresilian's name was not the more loved in consequence.

6. The King and his friends remained some time in Wales, but afterwards assembled a council at Nottingham, to which were summoned all the justices and sheriffs from every county, and some of the more notable citizens of London. In the midst of this assembly the King demanded of the judges their opinion as to the statutes passed in the preceding session of Parliament, whether they were derogatory to the royal prerogative, and if so, what punishment was incurred by those who had compelled the King to sub-

Council at Nottingham.

scribe to them. A unanimous answer was returned that the statutes were an invasion of the prerogative, and that those who had extorted the King's compliance had incurred the penalty of treason. This opinion was signed by all the judges, and countersigned by the members of the Council. It is true that some who signed it afterwards alleged that they had been driven to do so by fear; but to all appearance, it was by fear that they were induced to make such an assertion. The commission of regency was distinctly unconstitutional, and quite as great an outrage on the liberty of the subject as on the rights of the King. It was now declared invalid.

V. *The Struggle Continued—The Wonderful Parliament—The King of age.*

1. Hoping, accordingly, that he was now emancipated from the control under which he had been placed, Richard proceeded to London, where he arrived a few days before the date at which the commission of regency was to expire. He was met outside the capital by the mayor and citizens, wearing his own livery of white and crimson, and by them he was conducted, first to St. Paul's and afterwards to Westminster. But the Duke of Gloucester, and his allies the Earls of Arundel and Nottingham, had meanwhile taken alarm, and having advanced to Hackney at the head of 40,000 men, were joined next day at Waltham Cross by Henry, Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt, and by the Earl of Warwick. These five lords gave it out as their object to deliver the King from certain traitors who, they said, kept him under undue control, and, according to the phraseology then in use, they 'appealed of treason' five of the King's principal advisers.

A.D. 1387. Nov. 10.

2. Richard had at first thought of resistance to this

great armed host, but he soon found the city of London was not to be depended on. The lords gave out that the King's chosen counsellors urged him to treat with France for aid to put them down. Richard, it was said, was going to sell Calais to the French kng. The Mayor of London told the King the city was willing to arm against his enemies, but not against his friends. Everywhere the favourites were unpopular, and the Duke of Gloucester and his allies were looked upon as the true friends of the King and kingdom. The city opened its gates to them, and the five 'lords appellants' presented themselves before Richard in Westminster Hall, named the five councillors whom they accused as traitors, flung down their gloves, and offered to prove the truth of their accusations by single combat. The King, however, decided that the matter should not be so determined, promising that it should be fully discussed in the next Parliament. Meanwhile, he insisted that both parties should be considered as remaining under his protection.

3. Unfortunately, the King's protection, so far as the one side was concerned, was now of very little value. Richard was again in the hands of those from whom he had been endeavouring to escape, and they consulted seriously about his deposition. The favourites saw that there was no safety for them except in flight, and they one and all escaped from London in disguise. Archbishop Nevill of York retired into the north country in the habit of a simple priest. The Duke of Ireland fled to Chester in the character of a groom, accompanied by four or five others. The Earl of Suffolk betook himself to Calais, where his brother Edmund de la Pole was governor of the castle. Dressed as a Flemish poulterer and carrying a basket with capons as if to supply the garrison, he sought admission to the fortress; but his brother thought it his

Flight of the King's favourites.

duty to deliver him to Lord William Beauchamp, governor of the town, by whom he was sent back to England.

4. The King was utterly deserted. He had, however, commissioned the Duke of Ireland to raise forces for him in Cheshire, and the duke collected a body of 5,000 men with whom he marched southwards to the borders of Oxfordshire. He was met at Radcot Bridge upon the Thames by a force under the Earl of Derby. Seeking to avoid this army he was confronted by another under the Duke of Gloucester. Hemmed in on all sides he at once gave up the hope of victory and endeavoured to save himself by flight. He plunged on horseback into the river, leaving his helmet and armour on the bank. It was now night, and no one saw what had become of him. He was supposed to have been drowned. Molyneux, Constable of Chester, who also dashed into the river, was forced to return for fear of being pierced with arrows, and had his skull cleft on relanding. A groom and a boy were also killed. For the rest there was little fighting, or rather none. The Cheshire men were stripped of their weapons and even of their very clothes, and were left to go home in a state of disgraceful nakedness. The Duke of Ireland found means to escape to Ireland.

Encounter at Radcot Bridge, Dec. 20.

5. The lords returned in triumph to London. Their armies, in three divisions, mustered at Clerkenwell, 40,000 strong. After a little hesitation the city opened its gates to them. The King, who was spending his Christmas in the Tower, knew now that he was completely in their power. The victors sought an interview with him and were admitted within the fortress. They showed him the letters he himself had written to the Duke of Ireland ordering him to raise a force to oppose them, and they led him on to the ramparts from whence he could see Tower Hill covered with an immense

Dec 26.

multitude of their followers. 'These,' said the Duke of Gloucester, 'are but a tenth part of the numbers who will join us to put down traitors.' The lords had not been able to agree about Richard's deposition, which, however acceptable it might have been to the Duke of Gloucester, was opposed by the Earls of Derby and Nottingham. But they were quite united in the determination to take vengeance on all who had given the King independent advice. Writs of summons had been issued by Richard for the meeting of Parliament, in which, considering the subjects that were to be discussed, the sheriffs had been instructed to return as knights of the shire persons who had not taken part in the recent quarrels. These writs were revoked on the ground that such a qualification was contrary to the ancient form, and new writs were issued omitting the objectionable clause. A.D. 1388. Jan. 1. Proclamations were then issued for the appearance before the Parliament of the Archbishop of York, the Duke of Ireland, Suffolk, Tresilian, and Sir Nicholas Brambre; while at the same time orders were sent out consigning the two latter to Gloucester Castle, and a number of other friends of the King to confinement in other places. But Tresilian was not yet in custody. He was hiding himself from the vengeance that pursued him. Jan. 4.

6. Every one in whom the King had hitherto placed his confidence was now removed. Even his confessor, the Bishop of Chichester, was forbidden to come near him. The dominant party had not the least opposition to fear in the approaching Parliament. Some rumours, however, had got abroad which they felt it would be well to contradict at the commencement of the session. So after the causes for which Parliament was summoned had been declared by the Bishop of Ely as Chancellor in the King's name, the Duke of Gloucester Feb. 3.

came forward and knelt before his sovereign, saying that he understood he had been accused of an intention to depose him and make himself king, from which he offered to justify himself in whatever manner the peers thought proper. The charge was certainly not without some foundation in truth, and the other 'lords appellants' knew it well. But Richard at once declared in full Parliament that he held his uncle perfectly innocent.

7. After this the serious work of the session commenced, and very serious work it proved to be. It was not without significance that the clause in the writs intended to secure impartiality was cancelled. The doings of this Parliament are without a parallel in English history,—so much so that the name 'Wonderful Parliament' came afterwards to be applied to it. With equal truth it was also called 'the Merciless Parliament.' On the very first day, all but one of the judges were arrested in their own courts while sitting upon the bench, and sent to the Tower. They were to be brought to account for the advice they had given the King that the proceedings of the last Parliament were unconstitutional. A long impeachment was then drawn up against the five ministers accused by the five lords appellants. The charges against them were mainly that they had misled the King and alienated his true lords from him, with some more specific accusations in connection with the conference at Nottingham and similar matters. One article also spoke of an intention, that it was said had been entertained, to make the Duke of Ireland king of that country and alienate it from the Crown of England.

The Wonderful Parliament.

8. Before pronouncing judgment upon this impeachment, the King desired to have the advice of the lawyers. The bill was laid before a committee of the profession, who pronounced it altogether irregular, either in civil or

ecclesiastical law. The lords, however, decided that in cases of treason, and when the accused were members of their own body, no other law could be recognised than the law of Parliament itself. After some days' discussion fourteen articles of the indictment were declared to amount to treason, and four of the appellees were found guilty. The Duke of Ireland, Suffolk, and Tresilian were condemned to be hanged and forfeit all their goods. The Archbishop of York was found guilty, and his temporalities were seized; but being a churchman, the penalty of death could not be pronounced against him. The King, however, was made to write to Rome for his translation to the Archbishopric of St. Andrew's in Scotland, a country where the authority of Urban VI. was not recognised, and by this means he was in effect deprived. He escaped to Flanders, where he by some means was fortunate enough to obtain possession of a small living.

9. The Archbishop, the Duke of Ireland, Suffolk, and Tresilian were all absent when judgment was pronounced against them. The duke had escaped to the Continent, and the earl had found a refuge in France. But Tresilian was lurking disguised in Westminster. He was discovered, brought up for sentence, and dismissed to immediate execution. The last of the accused councillors, Sir Nicholas Brambre, was in prison. He offered to prove his innocence by wager of battle, but it was decided that such a mode of defence was not applicable to the case; so he too underwent the capital sentence.

10. The Commons next impeached the judges and law officers who had counselled the King at Nottingham to set aside the ordinances of the last Parliament. They endeavoured to save themselves by alleging that they had acted under compulsion, but the excuse was not admitted. They were found guilty of treason, but at the intercession of the bishops their lives were spared and they were

banished to Ireland for the remainder of their days. But John Blake, a lawyer who had proposed to indict the five lords for conspiracy, and Thomas Uske, who had accepted the office of under-sheriff of Middlesex for the purpose, were condemned and executed. The Bishop of Chichester, who, as we have already mentioned, was the King's confessor, was then called before Parliament. He denied a charge imputed to him of having used threats to the judges at Nottingham, and said they were placed under no constraint whatever. But he had been guilty of concealing the 'treasons' of the condemned councillors; in excuse for which he in vain pleaded the confidential nature of his office, and that he had used his best efforts with the King to prevent mischief. He was banished, like the judges, into Ireland.

11. Not satisfied with this, the Commons proceeded to impeach four other knights as accomplices of the condemned traitors. The first was Sir Simon Burley, lately Constable of Dover Castle, a veteran of the preceding reign, to whom the Black Prince had committed the care of Richard's childhood. He offered, like Brambre, to prove his innocence in the ordinary manner of knights. This he was not allowed to do, but his accusers had much trouble to establish his guilt. The King, the Queen, and even the Earl of Derby, one of the lords appellants, made the most urgent efforts to induce the Duke of Gloucester to spare his life; but all was to no purpose. Of thirteen charges one was at length declared to be proved; sentence of death was passed upon him, and he was beheaded the same day. The three other knights suffered a week later.

12. At the end of four months—an unusually long session in those days—Parliament was dissolved, but not until it had made the King renew his coronation oath and every member of both Houses swear that they would never allow its ordinances to be repealed. Already all

the members had sworn at the beginning of the session to be true to the five lords and take their part against all opponents so long as Parliament should last; the sheriffs also throughout the kingdom were ordered to exact a similar oath of all the principal residents within their jurisdictions.

13. Even after the breaking up of such a Parliament the King was left for some time in subjection to the confederate lords. But next year, at a council held in the beginning of May, he suddenly asked his uncle Gloucester to tell him his age. 'Your Highness,' said the duke, 'is in your twenty-second year.' 'Then,' replied the King, 'I must be old enough to manage my own affairs, as every heir in my kingdom is at liberty to do when he is twenty-one. I thank you, my lords, for the trouble you have taken on my behalf hitherto, but I shall not require your services any longer.' On this he required the Great Seal and the keys of the Exchequer to be given up to him, and made the venerable Bishop Waynflete his chancellor instead of the Archbishop of York. Of the other lords then in his council he retained the Duke of York and the Earl of Derby as members of a new council; but Gloucester and the rest he dismissed. At the same time no violent change was effected; and the King's assertion of his independence seems to have met with general approbation.

A.D. 1389. May 3. The King of age.

VI. *The King and the Duke of Gloucester.*

1. For some years little or nothing occurred to disturb the harmony between King and people. There was, it is true, at one time, a renewal of the old distrust between the city of London and the Court, and the city not only refused the King a loan of 1,000*l.*, but actually maltreated a Lombard who was

A.D. 1392.

willing to accommodate him. For this the mayor and sheriffs were arrested, and it was determined that the Londoners should no longer have the free election of their rulers, but be governed by a warden appointed by the King. But Richard was soon persuaded to forgive the citizens. He consented to receive deputies from the city, who pleaded hard in behalf of their ancient liberties. He ratified some of their franchises, amended others, and restored the right of self-government to the city on their finding him 10,000*l.* security for their future good behaviour. Finally, he consented to pay the city a visit, when he was received with every possible demonstration of joy and satisfaction. The nobles, however, we are told, were offended at his lenity towards a turbulent metropolis.

2. But from the time of the dismissal of the five lords, it was hardly possible that those noblemen could be so assured of the King's forgiveness and cordiality as to feel no kind of anxiety for the consequences of their past conduct. The Duke of Gloucester, in particular, distrusted his nephew, and held aloof from his councils. When summoned to attend and give his advice on public affairs with other lords, it is said that he was always the last to come and the first to go. Richard, nevertheless, showed him a remarkable degree of confidence. He
A.D. 1393. employed him in negotiations for peace with
A.D. 1394. France, took him in his company over to Ireland, to subdue some rebellious chieftains,
A.D. 1395. and while remaining in that country sent him over again to England to demand supplies from a Parliament at London. But the old breach was not effectually healed. The duke courted popularity, and whenever the policy of Richard was in any degree opposed to the prejudices of the majority, he was always on the people's side. In the year 1394 Richard lost his

Queen, Anne of Bohemia, to whom he was most devotedly attached. Two years later he endeavoured to convert an old enemy into a friend, and proposed to form a firm alliance with France, cemented by a marriage with Isabella the French king's daughter, though she was only eight years old. To this the Duke of Gloucester showed himself strongly opposed, appealing to the old national hatred of France, and insinuating that Richard would give up Calais and all the English conquests to the French king. The marriage nevertheless was duly celebrated, and it was not long after that the misunderstanding between the King and his uncle came to a crisis. A.D. 1396.

3. Information was conveyed to the King that Gloucester had formed a new conspiracy against him with his old associates. According to Froissart, he applied to his two other uncles for advice. They confessed the duke was greatly given to intrigue, but advised the King to let the matter sleep, as he had no power to carry his designs into execution. Richard, however, was not thus satisfied; and if we may trust his own proclamation afterwards, his uncles must have admitted at length that it was needful to anticipate the danger. He accordingly paid a visit to the Duke of Gloucester at his castle of Pleshy, in Essex, and there caused him to be arrested and delivered to the custody of the Earl of Nottingham, the Earl Marshal, by whom he was immediately conducted to the Thames, put on board a boat, and conveyed over to Calais. The Earls of Warwick and Arundel were arrested at the same time. A.D. 1397.

4. The policy pursued by these same lords ten years before was now turned against themselves. At a council held at Nottingham, a number of the other nobles, including Edmund Earl of Rutland, a son of the Duke of

York, and Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal, engaged to 'appeal' them of treason at a coming parliament. On its assembling, the Commons petitioned that the commission of regency of the year 1386 should be repealed, as having been extorted by violence, and that it should be treason to attempt to procure such a commission in future. They also desired that all pardons, whether general or special, heretofore granted to the Duke of Gloucester and the Earls of Arundel and Warwick, should be revoked, as having been given under constraint or passed in ignorance. This was in effect but the first step towards calling them to account for actions which had been for many years condoned. The petitions, however, were unanimously agreed to by both Houses; and the Commons, leaving to the Peers the trial of the charges brought by the appellants against the three lords, proceeded to impeach Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, a brother of the Earl of Arundel, of high treason, as having been instrumental in procuring the commission of regency and the execution of Sir Simon Burley, against the will of the King. The archbishop acknowledged the facts in the presence of the King and certain lords; his confession was recorded in Parliament, and sentence of banishment and confiscation was pronounced against him.

Execution of the Earl of Arundel.

5. Of the three lords who were to be tried in Parliament, the first who was brought up for judgment was Arundel, the archbishop's brother. He was a favourite with the people, but had enemies among his brother peers, besides being disliked by the King. In the early part of the reign he had been appointed admiral, and had won for himself general admiration by a splendid victory over a combined fleet of Flemings, French, and Spaniards, when he captured a hundred ships. Such a man was of

course looked up to by all those who were opposed to the French alliance. But John of Gaunt, with whom he had more than once quarrelled, was commissioned to preside at his trial as Lord High Admiral of England; and the revocation of all the pardons previously granted to him destroyed the only plea by which he ventured to defend himself. He was condemned to be beheaded, and was executed the same day in Cheapside.

6. The Earl Marshal, who was governor of Calais, was then commanded to bring over the Duke of Gloucester to be tried before his peers. He sent back an answer that the duke could not be produced, as he had died in his custody at Calais. It was naturally believed that he had been put to death by Richard's order; and though the fact is not absolutely free from doubt, there is certainly great reason to suspect that it was true. The duke, however, had made a written confession in his own hand before his death, in reply to certain questions which William Rickhill, one of the justices, had been commissioned to administer to him. He had acknowledged the offences he had committed against the King ten years before. He admitted that he had come armed into the King's palace, taken the King's letters from his messengers and opened them without his leave; that he had taken counsel about throwing up his allegiance and deposing his sovereign. All these acts, however, he professed to have done in self-defence and for fear of his life; moreover, the deposition of the King, he affirmed, was only intended to be for two or three days, after which the confederate lords would have renewed their oaths to him and placed him in as high a position as before. But since a certain day when he had been sworn to the King upon the Sacrament at Langley, he denied that he had ever made or known of any gatherings against him; and on these

Murder of the Duke of Gloucester.

grounds he appealed to the King's compassion, as a prince that had always shown himself merciful in pardoning offenders.

7. His own acts, certainly, when he was in power, gave him but little claim to compassion now; yet it would have been well for Richard if, after obtaining from him such a confession, he had suffered his uncle to live. The murder, indeed, was quite unnecessary, for he could have had no difficulty, if so minded, in bringing Gloucester to the block by the judgment of his peers in parliament; and if he feared the spirit of disaffection such an act would probably have aroused, he ought to have feared no less a public rumour that the duke had been foully dealt with. But the time had come, apparently, when he thought it necessary for his own safety altogether to extinguish the confederacy which, eleven years before, had stripped him of his royal power and almost succeeded in preventing the possibility of his recovering it. If treason of such a magnitude could be condoned,—if any pardon afterwards granted could shield such great offenders,—was there not very serious danger that a similar attempt would be made another time?

The Earl of Warwick banished.

8. The Earl of Warwick did not undergo the fate either of Gloucester or of Arundel. When brought to trial he confessed his guilt, and sentence was pronounced upon him, but the King commuted it into exile, and banished him to the Isle of Man.

VII. *The Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk.*

1. Thus were three of the five 'lords appellants' of 1387 incapacitated for giving further trouble. The other two still remained alive, but their conduct was more favourably construed. It was declared that the Earls of Derby

and Nottingham had separated from their colleagues whenever they perceived the true nature of their designs; and so far were they from being incriminated on the present occasion, that they stood among the accusers of their old confederates. In point of fact they were justified in disclaiming full complicity with Gloucester, for it was owing to their opposition that he was obliged to abandon the design of deposing his nephew. Besides, the Earl of Derby had made the strongest remonstrances against the execution of Sir Simon Burley, and even quarrelled with his uncle for insisting on it. As to Nottingham, the Earl Marshal, his conduct had evidently, long before this, regained him the King's confidence, for Richard had sent him into France to negotiate his marriage with Isabella, and even as his proxy to marry her. But at this time, as if to remove all possible misapprehension, the King took occasion to acknowledge both these lords publicly as his friends, by creating the Earl of Derby Duke of Hereford, and the Earl Marshal Duke of Norfolk.

2. Unfortunately the turn which affairs were now taking hardly allowed them to repose with confidence even on these strong evidences of the King's regard. Parliament was busy reversing all that the Wonderful Parliament had done, and in a supplementary session held at Shrewsbury in the beginning of the following year the whole of the proceedings of that Parliament were expressly annulled. It would have been well if this had been done by measures that were not open to very much the same objections. But the acts of this Parliament were in reality nothing else than a copy of those passed in the Parliament which they condemned. As in 1387 five lords appealed the King's favourites of treason, so now the friends of the King appealed three of the former lords appellants. As in 1387 an impeachment was sus-

The Parliament of Shrewsbury.

tained declared by the lawyers to be irregular, so now it was ruled that no pardons, general or particular, could be pleaded against the appeal. As in 1388 Lords and Commons all took an oath that they would not allow the acts of that Parliament to be repealed, the very same was done on this occasion. Further, as in 1388 Archbishop Nevill of York had been, on application to the Pope, deprived of his archbishopric by being translated to the See of St. Andrew's in Scotland, where the authority of Urban was not acknowledged, the very same means were now used to deprive Archbishop Arundel of the See of Canterbury. He, too, was translated by Urban to St. Andrew's. It was a great day of retribution for past misdeeds, and warning had been given already that royal pardons were no security to the offenders.

3. Such being the case, it happened that one day in December 1397, the new-made Duke of Norfolk overtook the new-made Duke of Hereford on the road between Brentford and London, and in the course of conversation expressed a fear that even they two might be brought to account for their old confederacy with Gloucester and the affair of Radcot Bridge. The Duke of Hereford said he could not believe that the King would be guilty of so great perfidy, but Norfolk insinuated that it was no longer possible to trust to anything, and that they would be made responsible like the others. In communicating his thoughts thus freely to the Duke of Hereford, Norfolk doubtless trusted either to his sense of honour or of interest to keep it secret. But his confidence was misplaced. The general drift of the conversation was communicated by Hereford to the King, who commanded him to submit a report of it to Parliament. This he did in the session held at Shrewsbury in the beginning of the year 1398—with what results we shall see presently.

A.D. 1398.

4. It is evident that since the days of the commission of regency a considerable reaction had taken place in favour of the royal prerogative. Authority had been shaken to its foundation at the beginning of the reign. Wat Tyler and the rebels had shown its weakness. The King, who was the constitutional source of power, was then a minor, and a strong despotism, under a popular favourite like Gloucester, was preferred to a more equitable government by weaker men. The spirit of the King himself was cowed by being thus brought into subjection. He failed in one attempt to reassert his authority, and even when he did regain his liberty he made no attempt to punish the wrong that had been done to him. The opinions given by his judges at Nottingham were still branded as treason. The judges themselves he only ventured to recall from banishment in 1397. But now he had a Parliament desirous of restoring authority to its old foundations. The constraint that had been put upon the King in former days was at length declared to have been illegal. The questions addressed by the King to the judges at Nottingham and the answers given by them, which they themselves afterwards disowned through fear, were read in the Parliament at Shrewsbury. The judges and serjeants-at-law were called in and asked to give their opinion on the subject. They one and all confirmed the answers given by the former judges, and declared that they would have made the same replies. The commission of regency, the Wonderful Parliament and all its acts, were therefore illegal, and were accordingly so declared. As the King was the real source of all legitimate power, the King's will could not be lawfully put under constraint of any kind.

5. The reaction was not unnatural, but it was a dangerous one to carry too far; and the Parliament at Shrewsbury carried it to an extreme. It was not in itself

calculated to give greater weight to their proceedings, that having once met at Westminster, they should have assembled after the Christmas recess on the borders of Wales. Yet in a very brief sitting at Shrewsbury, this Parliament not only annulled the whole proceedings of the Wonderful Parliament, but enacted that any attempt to annul their own should be considered treason. The King even asked if greater security could be given on this head, and if he could bind his successors; but being told that he could not, he made application to the Pope and obtained a bull denouncing excommunication against any one who should attempt to reverse what had been done. To complete the fabric of despotism, the Parliament, after sitting only four days, delegated its whole powers to a committee of twelve lords and six commoners, special friends of the King, who were to act after its dissolution. By this ingenious device Richard was made practically absolute. It could hardly be necessary for him ever to call a parliament again; for wherever the King himself was with a sufficient number of the committee, he had the full powers of Parliament with him.

6. To this tribunal were referred the accusations brought by the Duke of Hereford against Norfolk. Both parties were summoned to appear before it, first at Oswestry and afterwards at Windsor; but as nothing could be elicited from either, except assertion on the one hand and denial on the other, it was proposed, and agreed to by both dukes, to settle the matter by wager of battle according to the laws of chivalry. The combat was appointed to be at Coventry on September 16. The whole nation was agitated at the prospect of the coming event, and when the lists were drawn up on the day appointed, Richard fearing disturbances among the nobles, had 10,000 persons in arms to keep the peace. On which

Wager of battle.

side lay the sympathies of most men there could not be a doubt, for the Duke of Norfolk was commonly looked upon as the murderer of the Duke of Gloucester, and the Londoners even insinuated that the wager of battle was a plot of the King's to destroy his cousin as he had already destroyed his uncle. Henry of Lancaster, as he was popularly called, the Duke of Hereford, was everywhere the favourite.

7. At Coventry, on the day appointed, the combatants entered the lists. Each took an oath that his quarrel was just, the Lord Marshal examined their spears to see that they were of equal length, and a herald commanded them to mount their horses and proceed to the combat. But at this point the King threw down his warder as a signal to suspend further proceedings, and consulted with his parliamentary council what course it was best to take in a matter so full of danger. After two hours' deliberation, the determination was announced. To preserve the peace of the realm the King decreed that the Duke of Hereford should be banished for ten years, and that the Duke of Norfolk, as it appears he had confessed to some points which might have occasioned trouble in the land, should quit the kingdom as a pilgrim, never to return, and should dwell in Germany, Bohemia, or Hungary for the rest of his days. Finally, lest they should become reconciled abroad and combine against the King, they were forbidden to communicate with each other or with the deprived Archbishop Arundel.

The two dukes banished.

8. A decision like this was a strange perversion of justice. On the face of the matter one party was guilty of treason, or the other of gross and malicious libel. The King could not determine on which side lay the guilt, and professed to regard either party as innocent, yet out of considerations of expediency he punished both as if

they had both been guilty. There was, besides, an apparent partiality shown to the Duke of Hereford on grounds which were not very explicitly declared. But the unfairness of the original decision was not all; for while the sentence against Norfolk passed uncriticised, the milder sentence against Hereford was still further mitigated. Owing, doubtless, to the influence of his father, John of Gaunt, and to his general popularity, the term of his exile was reduced from ten years to six before he left the country. That of Norfolk was not altered. So the latter went abroad, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and died on his return at Venice of a broken heart. What became of the Duke of Hereford must be related at greater length.

VIII. *The King and Henry of Lancaster.*

1. Richard had now got rid of all the five lords who had leagued themselves together against him in 1387. He had also got rid of parliamentary control. But he could not be altogether free from the fear of future combinations. And having already entered on a career of despotism he saw no means to make himself secure except to become more and more despotic. He and his parliamentary committee issued an ordinance declaring it treason to attempt to obtain a reversal of any of their decrees, just as it had been already declared treason to attempt to annul those of the Parliament. Every bishop before obtaining possession of his temporalities, and every lord before coming into his inheritance, was to swear to observe, not only the statutes made in the Parliament of the twenty-first year of the reign, but also all the ordinances made afterwards by the parliamentary committee.

Richard's despotism.

2. But even this abuse of power was not so much felt

as some others to which the King was afterwards driven by the state of his exchequer. His finances were getting low, and he raised money by forced loans. All who were any way implicated in the acts of Gloucester, Warwick, and Arundel, were compelled to purchase their pardons by fines; and seventeen counties were in this way amerced as having assisted the confederates at Radcot Bridge. But the mode of extortion which naturally excited the greatest amount of discontent was the issuing of what were called blank charters, to which even those not accused of treason, but the moneyed men of the kingdom generally, were compelled to set their seals, without knowing to what amount they made themselves liable.

A.D. 1399.

His extortions.

3. The exigency which led him to resort to this last means of raising money seems to have been occasioned by a rebellion in Ireland which he determined to go and put down with an army under his personal command. He had already, some years before, visited that country with results which appeared at the time to be satisfactory. All attempts to oppose his power were soon abandoned. The native chieftains submitted and did him homage. Four native kings acknowledged his sovereignty at Dublin, received the honour of knighthood, and promised to adopt English customs. But now he learned that his cousin, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, whom he had left as his vicegerent, had been slain in a new revolt of the natives, and he determined to go thither once more and bring the Irish into more complete subjection.

Rebellion in Ireland.

4. But meanwhile an event had taken place which unhappily suggested to the King's mind the thought of an act still more arbitrary and perfidious. Old John of Gaunt died in the early part of the year, and his title as Duke of Lancaster de-

Death of John of Gaunt, Feb. 3

volved rightly on his son the banished Hereford. It had also been conceded to the Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk before they left England, that notwithstanding their banishment they might by attorney take possession of any inheritance that might fall to them in their absence. But the King's wants were great, the duchy of Lancaster was wealthy, and it occurred to Richard and his council (now that there was no one on that council to represent the interests of the family), that a banished man was not qualified to inherit property. The former grant was consequently annulled, and the King's officers took possession of the property of the deceased duke, as a forfeiture due to the Crown.

5. After Whitsuntide Richard sailed for Ireland from Milford Haven with a fleet of 200 ships. Within two days he arrived at Waterford, from which he advanced to Kilkenny. There several chieftains submitted to him with halters round their necks. He then went on to Dublin, and was preparing for a further campaign when he suddenly received news from England of a most alarming nature, which showed how much his presence was required in his own kingdom. Henry of Lancaster, who since he left the country had resided at Paris, had obtained permission of the French king to pay a visit to the Duke of Brittany. Arrived in that country he hired three small vessels with which he sailed for England, having in his company the deprived Archbishop of Canterbury and a very small band of followers. After some days he landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire, a harbour at the mouth of the Humber now washed away by the sea. He made known that it was his object to recover his paternal estates, with the title, which justly belonged to him, of Duke of Lancaster, and he was joined by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, be-

The King sails to Ireland.

Henry of Lancaster lands in England.

fore whom he took oath at Doncaster that he had no further aim than to seek his own inheritance.

6. The King's uncle, Edmund Duke of York, whom Richard had appointed keeper of England during his absence, on hearing of Henry's landing took counsel how to oppose him. He summoned the King's retainers to join his standard at St. Alban's, where he mustered 1,000 lances and 60,000 archers; but so high was the popularity of the Duke of Lancaster, so deep the general sense of the injustice with which he had been treated, that these very men declared they would not go against him. On this the Duke of York bent his course towards Wales, where Richard had always met with the most unwavering support. He reached Berkeley Castle, while the Lord Treasurer, Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire, with Bushy and Green, two leading members of Richard's parliamentary committee, went to Bristol. Sir John Bushy had been the Speaker of the House of Commons before the last Parliament was dissolved; and he, with Sir Henry Green and Sir William Bagot, were universally detested as the principal agents of the King's extortions. Meanwhile the Duke of Lancaster had passed southwards with a following which continually increased the further he went on, and had arrived at Evesham as the Duke of York reached Berkeley. The latter had now no hope of taking the field against him; but the thought of his duty to Richard still weighed upon his mind, and he seems to have cast about for some means of satisfying his conscience on the score of his allegiance, without attempting an enterprise which was manifestly hopeless. Was the Duke of Lancaster really a rebel after all? He sent him a message to demand his object in coming thus armed into the land—did he mean to dispossess King Richard of the crown, or did he only seek to recover his own property? According to the oath already taken by Duke

The Duke of York.

Henry at Doncaster this last was his only object; but that object could not be effected unless the evil counsellors who had persuaded Richard to confiscate his possessions were removed and punished. So Henry confessed that he came to remove the King's evil counsellors, but he denied that he had any designs against the King himself. This declaration appears to have satisfied the scruples of the Duke of York, and he, the chosen guardian of Richard's kingdom in his absence, went over to Henry's side.

7. Duke Henry, now practically master of the whole kingdom, went on to Bristol, where he caused the Earl of Wiltshire, Green, and Bushy to be beheaded; the first for an alleged bargain that he had made to sell Calais to the French king, and the two others on the ground that they had counselled extortionate taxation. All three, indeed, along with Bagot, had farmed the revenues of the kingdom, and derived large profits from the people's burdens; so they met with little compassion. It was fortunate for Bagot that he was not apprehended at the same time; but instead of going to Bristol on Henry's approach, he had escaped into Cheshire, from which he passed over into Ireland.

8. Meanwhile the King himself was in Ireland, ignorant of the revolt of his kingdom at home. When he was first apprised of Henry's invasion he was thunderstruck. He had with him at that very time the son of the invader, afterwards the brilliant victor of Agincourt, Henry V. He was his godson, and he had just recently made him a knight with his own hands. But his thoughts first turned not to the son but to the father of his present enemy. 'Ha, good uncle of Lancaster,' he exclaimed, 'God have mercy upon your soul? For had I believed you, this man would not have angered me now. You told me truly I did ill to forgive him so frequently. Three times have I

pardoned him his offences against me; this is the fourth time he has provoked me.' Another time, addressing the young man, 'See,' he said, 'what thy father has done. He has invaded my realm as an enemy, killing and imprisoning my lieges without pity. I grieve for thee, for this mischance may cost thee thine inheritance.' 'My gracious lord,' said the other, 'this news distresses me greatly; but you see that I am innocent of what my father has done.' 'I know it,' said the King, 'and I hold thee guiltless.' The young prince, however, along with a son of the Duke of Gloucester, was removed to the Castle of Trim for security.

9. Yet even now the urgency of the crisis was scarcely realized. That the King must return to England was obvious, but there were not enough vessels at Dublin to transport a large army, so the question was whether the King himself should go over at once, or send the Earl of Salisbury first into Wales. By the advice of the Duke of Albemarle (or as his name was popularly called, Aumerle), the Duke of York's son, the latter course was resolved on. Salisbury was sent over with as large a force as the ships could convey, and the King marched with the rest to Waterford to embark there, intending to rejoin the Earl in Wales. The resolution was most unfortunate. The Earl of Salisbury landed at Conway and soon gathered to his standard a large number of the Welsh. But a whole fortnight elapsed and nothing was heard of the King, while it was known that Henry had gained nearly the whole of England, and was everywhere removing the King's officers and putting to death those who opposed him. At last the King arrived at Milford Haven along with his cousin the Duke of Albemarle, his half-brother the Duke of Exeter, and his nephew the Duke of Surrey, three bishops, and a pretty considerable army. But the news which met them on their arrival

was so discouraging that the great bulk of these forces very speedily deserted him; and Richard, after a consultation, set out in disguise by night, accompanied by just fourteen of his more trusty friends, to join the Earl of Salisbury at Conway, desiring the Duke of Albemarle and Sir Thomas Percy to follow him. They, however, in the morning dismissed the remaining forces and hastened to join Henry.

10. At Conway the King arrived in safety, but it was only to learn that his last hope had failed him. The Earl of Salisbury indeed was there; but the men whom he had at first succeeded in raising for the King's service were no longer with him. In the utter absence of all tidings from Richard disagreeable rumours had got abroad and he had found it impossible to keep them together. The Earl burst into tears when he saw his sovereign and explained to him the hopelessness of the situation, but it was presently arranged that the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey should go to Henry to learn the extent of his demands, and report them to the King. The Duke of Exeter was the King's brother, but he had married Henry's sister, and Henry on seeing him endeavoured to win him to his side; but he declined to allow either him or Surrey to return to the King, and sent the latter a prisoner to Chester Castle. Henry now resolved on obtaining possession of Richard's person, and commissioned the Earl of Northumberland to go to Conway. The Earl took with him a body of men and archers, with whose aid he took possession of Flint and Rhuddlan Castles, but before coming in sight of Conway he left them behind. That castle was too strong to be easily taken, and the King might have escaped from it by sea. Northumberland accordingly went forward with only five attendants, and obtained an audience of Richard as the bearer of a letter from the Duke of Exeter and of Henry's

answer to his message. The demands of Henry, he said, were that Richard should promise to govern according to law, that Exeter, Surrey, Salisbury, and the Bishop of Carlisle should be tried in Parliament as accomplices in the murder of Gloucester, and that Henry should be made grand justiciary of the kingdom, as his ancestors had been. On these conditions Henry was willing to come to Flint, ask the King's pardon on his knees, and go with him to London.

11. Only a sense of utter helplessness induced Richard to listen to these terms with patience. They implied that he was to deliver up, nominally only for trial, but really to execution, his brother, his nephew, and the counsellors who were then about him. On consultation with these last, however, it was thought good that he should dissemble, and only exact an oath from the Earl of Northumberland, which he had expressed himself quite ready to take, that Henry would adhere to these conditions. The Earl then swore to that effect upon the Sacrament, and Richard consented to accompany him. But they had not gone far when the King came in view of Northumberland's armed followers and saw he was betrayed. He would have returned, but the Earl seized his horse by the bridle and carried him off in all haste to Flint Castle, there to await an interview with Henry. On August 19 Henry came at the head of a mighty host, and presented himself before the King in full armour. 'My lord,' he said, 'I have come before you have sent for me. The reason is that your people commonly say you have ruled them very rigorously for twenty or two and twenty years; but, if it please God, I will help you to govern better.'

12. With great parade and blowing of trumpets Richard and his little company were conducted to Chester, where the King was confined in the dungeon of the castle. Writs, however, were issued in his name, summoning

Parliament to meet at London. In a few days the journey was resumed, and dismissing most of his forces the duke brought Richard to the capital, where the former was received with acclamations, the latter with curses. The King was committed to the Tower, and even his child queen, who was at this time but ten years old, was forbidden to visit him. On Michaelmas day his signature was obtained to an act of abdication in which he declared himself utterly incapable of governing and worthy to be deposed. The Parliament met on the following day. In it the King's resignation was read, and gave great satisfaction. An act was then passed setting forth a number of charges against his government as reasons for his deposition; which met with no opposition except from his faithful counsellor the Bishop of Carlisle, who for challenging the right of the two Houses to take such a step was sent prisoner to the Abbey of St. Alban's. Henry next stepped forward and claimed the throne as rightly due to him by descent from King Henry III.

Deposition of the King.

13. Now in point of fact Henry was not the next in succession. His father John of Gaunt was the fourth son of Edward III., and there were descendants of that King's third son, Lionel Duke of Clarence, living; so that it should have been quite unnecessary to go back so far as Henry III. At one time Richard himself had designated as his successor the nobleman who really stood next to him in the line of descent. This was Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, the same who was killed by the rebels in Ireland. This Roger had left a son Edmund to inherit his title; but Edmund was a mere child, and the inconvenience of another minority could not have been endured. So the nation was very well disposed to accept Henry as king without inquiring too closely into his claim by birthright; and

Henry's claim by descent.

Henry put forward a claim through his mother founded upon a very idle story indeed, a story so extravagant and untrue that it looks as if it had been invented to serve his purpose. The truth, however, seems to be that it was current in the days of his father John of Gaunt, who got it written in some chronicles which were sent to different monasteries, to flatter his vanity; and perhaps John of Gaunt expected that he himself might have been able one day to claim the crown upon the strength of it. This story was that so far back as the days of King Edward I. the succession had got out of the true line of descent; that the eldest son of Henry III. was not King Edward, but his brother Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster, who was commonly reputed the second son; and that this Edmund had been purposely set aside on account of his personal deformity. The plain fact of the matter was that Edmund Crouchback was six years younger than his brother Edward I., and that his surname of Crouchback had not the smallest reference to personal deformity, but only implied that he wore the cross upon his back as a crusader.

14. Archbishop Arundel then stepped forward and led Henry to the throne, on which, after a brief prayer, he took his seat amid general applause. The Parliament then dissolved after having sat a single day. As it had been summoned in Richard's name, its authority expired with his. Neither Parliament, judges, nor officers of any kind throughout England had any authority now till the new King had renewed their commissions. But Henry summoned the same Parliament to meet again six days afterwards, appointed new officers of the crown, and then withdrew to his palace.

15. So ended the unhappy reign of Richard II., a prince who had certainly very little natural capacity to govern, and who, called to the throne in boyhood, could

never be placed under such tuition as would have brought out the little capacity he had. It was the desire of the nation itself during his minority to emancipate him as much as possible from the control of his natural protector John of Gaunt; but when, yielding to this influence, he chose his own advisers, there rose up a cry that he was misled by favourites and abandoned himself entirely to the counsels of young men. These complaints, which, after all, were not altogether true, served the purpose of the factious Duke of Gloucester, and enabled him to establish for a time a despotism quite as odious and as absolute as any that an anointed king could have attained to. It was terminated, apparently to the general satisfaction, by an act of self-assertion on Richard's own part, when he came of age; and for some years after things went pretty smoothly. But as new dangers crossed his path he grew more arbitrary, imperious, and unjust. He met intrigue by treachery, put his troublesome uncle to death without a trial, extorted money from his subjects by forced loans, and by his own kingly authority perverted law and justice. Yet it may be questioned whether he was at heart the cruel and vindictive character he is often represented to have been. He was undoubtedly a man of very sensitive feelings, a most devoted husband, and apparently to his true friends steadfast, as far as his power would reach. But it was a question through the whole reign whether the kingly power was to be treated as a reality or as a fiction, and Richard, who was of an angry and passionate temper, was not the man to use any power entrusted to him with discretion.

16. In personal appearance he was handsome. There was a delicate beauty in his features which corresponded with a mode of life too luxurious for the age. He was a lover both of art and literature, the patron of Froissart, Gower, and Chaucer, and the builder of Westminster

Hall. But he was thought too fond of show and magnificence, and some of his contemporaries accused him of too great love of pleasure. Yet of positive immorality we have no real evidence, and his devotion and tenderness to both his queens (child as the second was) is a considerable presumption to the contrary. And as regards the expenses of his household, it does not appear that he was led on this account to tax his people immoderately. His ruin was simply owing to despotic and arbitrary measures—not in any way to pecuniary burdens that he inflicted on the nation.

CHAPTER III.

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

1. THE reign of Richard II. is an interesting period in English literature. Before that time there was, strictly speaking, hardly any English literature at all. There were, indeed, ballads and some rhyming chronicles in English, but all serious authors wrote in Latin. An author who desired many readers naturally preferred to use a language which was understood over all Europe. A courtly author, or one who aimed at refinement, would rather have written in French than in English; for French was the language of the King's court and also of the courts of law. Besides, the English spoken in one part of the country was so unlike the language current in another part, that an author writing in English could not have spoken to the whole people. But by this time Englishmen had begun to write in English for serious purposes. It was, apparently, in the latter part of the reign of Edward III. that a religious poet, whose name is believed to have been William Langland, wrote a remarkable allegorical

work called 'The Vision of Piers Plowman.' A little later, Wycliffe translated the Bible into English for the use of the unlearned. The influence of this latter work was extraordinary. It created throughout the land a much stronger sense of the reality of religious truth; and it placed in the hands of the common people a rich and suggestive literature, full of inexhaustible material for thought and reflection.

Wycliffe's Bible.

2. A native literature naturally grew up in the wake of such a book. The learned began to write for the people in their own tongue. Wycliffe himself wrote several treatises in English. The poet Chaucer, too, and his brother poet Gower, wrote for amusement or edification tales, poems, and prose compositions in English. Chaucer especially was a poet of the people; his English compositions are very numerous, and notwithstanding the antiquity of the language, are read with a living interest at this day. His mind is typical of the nation in its breadth and cultivation. While describing with intense enjoyment the humours of the road and of the tavern, he nevertheless paid the highest honour to the knight's ideal of chivalry and the parson's ideal of godliness. He looked into all the science and philosophy of the day, and expounded them in the vulgar speech. He wrote a book on astronomy for his little son Lewis. He translated from the French the poem, so popular upon the Continent, called the 'Romaunt of the Rose,' and he adapted tales from the Italian of Petrarch and Boccaccio, authors who lived in his own day, and one of whom he is supposed personally to have known. His best known work is the 'Canterbury Tales,' in which he describes a pilgrimage, such as was common in those days, to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Persons who had been ill used to make vows to visit that shrine on their recovery; and Chaucer represents about

Chaucer.

thirty pilgrims starting from the Tabard Inn in Southwark and telling stories, each in his turn, to amuse them on the way.

3. Chaucer was a man who had seen much of the world. He had fought in the wars of Edward III. in France, and had been some time a prisoner. He had visited Italy. He had been sent on embassies. He was patronised by John of Gaunt and was attached to the royal household. In 1386 he sat in Parliament—in that parliament in which Michael de la Pole was indicted; but what part he took in the proceedings we cannot say. When the commission of regency was instituted he was dismissed from the office of controller of Customs in London which had been granted to him by the Crown. But with some changes of fortune Chaucer generally remained in favour at Court, not only under Edward III. and Richard II., but also under Henry IV., in the beginning of whose reign he died.

4. The other poet of the day, John Gower, was Chaucer's personal friend, and was, like him, patronised by John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. 'Moral Gower' he was called by Chaucer, and the name was most appropriate. In all he wrote he was perpetually moralising. His principal works were three, entitled respectively, 'Speculum Meditantis,' 'Vox Clamantis,' and 'Confessio Amantis' (the Mirror of one Meditating, the Voice of one Crying, and the Confession of a Lover). The first of these poems was written in French and does not appear now to be extant. The second was written in Latin on the subject of Wat Tyler's rebellion. The third was written in English, in his old age, in obedience to a command of Richard II., who one day invited the poet into his barge and desired that he would dedicate some composition to him. He accordingly produced a long poem on the subject of love, which he made the

Gower.

vehicle of a multitude of tales and reflections. But the book was not dedicated to King Richard after all, or rather that dedication was withdrawn; for John Gower, who was what Dr. Johnson called 'a good hater,' was completely alienated from his sovereign in the latter part of his reign, and he presented the completed labour to Henry of Lancaster. Gower also wrote a political poem called a 'Tripartite Chronicle,' in honour of the revolution which placed Henry IV. upon the throne, in which he very severely reviewed the whole government of Richard II., calling it 'a work of hell,' and extolled his dethronement and the accession of Henry as 'a work in Christ.'

5. Wycliffe died on the last day of the year 1384, three years after Wat Tyler's rebellion, and two years before the impeachment of the Duke of Suffolk. His name must always be chiefly associated in our minds with the translation of the Bible and the doctrine promulgated by himself and his followers. For it was through that work that he exerted so powerful an influence on the succeeding age, and to it his followers, who were commonly called Lollards, continually appealed in proof of their favourite tenets. But there is another aspect in which Wycliffe may be regarded. He was the last of what are commonly called the great Schoolmen—distinguished philosophers, who, during the Middle Ages, upheld and promulgated at the universities new systems of thought, which they themselves had introduced. Such were, in former days, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, and a number of others, whose teaching at the universities was celebrated throughout the world. And even after Wycliffe's day there were schoolmen of high celebrity, such as his great theological opponent Thomas Netter of Walden, who was esteemed the prince of controversialists. But there was no schoolman after

The Lollards.

Wycliffe who could be regarded as the originator of the philosophy which he defended in the schools. He was the last who had a system of his own.

6. His followers increased rapidly in England, and, partly perhaps in consequence of the intercourse with Bohemia created by Richard's first marriage, his doctrines found a large amount of favour in that country also. Of this we shall have occasion to take notice hereafter. In other countries the opinions of Wycliffe do not appear to have produced any perceptible effect.

7. The whole learning of the age was contained in the writings of these schoolmen; yet they had done little or nothing to advance that which forms so great a study in our own day—natural science. Some, like Roger Bacon, had made a remarkable number of experiments and pushed their inquiries into nature as well as into logic and mathematics, but nothing had yet been done to classify the results of repeated observations. The virtues of particular herbs were known, but botany had not yet been heard of, still less geology or mineralogy. Of chemistry there was no real knowledge, but experiments were made in a kind of spurious science called alchemy, by which it was supposed that a process might one day be discovered of transmuting other substances into gold. Of astronomy, in like manner, nothing was truly known, but there was a good deal of misdirected observation of astronomical facts, from the supposition that a man's fortune in life was influenced by the position of the planets at the time of his birth. Astrology, however, did teach men to observe before the day of true science came. Learning and science.

8. That the earth itself was a planet no one had any idea. It was believed to be the centre of the universe, round which the heavens revolved with all their hosts, the sun, moon, and planets making special circuits of

their own. Wise men did indeed believe the earth to be a sphere, but no one had hitherto thought of attempting to reach the other side of it. Nothing was known of any lands west of the Atlantic or south of Central Africa; while the most remote country to the east was the distant Cathay or China, which had been visited by the great traveller Sir John Mandeville in the days of Edward III. Very little, however, was known of any part of Asia. The Genoese and Venetian merchants could extend their commerce no further than the Black Sea and the river Don, and the world which lay beyond excited very little interest.

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY IV.

I. *The Revolution Completed—Invasion of Scotland.*

1. THE reign of Richard II. was a series of reactions, in which each successive revolution undid the work of the last revolution and confirmed anew that of a former one. A new reign and a new dynasty had now begun, with a King who was not fitful, weak, or passionate, and who was not likely to suffer mob-law or confederacies to gain the upper hand with him. But the case was still the same as heretofore; the first act of the new revolution was necessarily the annulling of the last. Parliament accordingly declared null and void the whole proceedings of the Parliament of Shrewsbury, and confirmed again those of the Wonderful Parliament which the Parliament of Shrewsbury had declared null. The judgments upon the Duke of Gloucester and the Earls of Arundel and Warwick were reversed, and those who had been accessory to the proceedings against the duke were called to account for their

A.D. 1399.

The new revolution.

conduct. They one and all gave it as an excuse that they had acted under compulsion, and laid the blame upon the deposed King. On this a stormy scene took place. Lord Fitzwalter maintained that the Duke of Albemarle's excuse was untrue, and offered to prove it so in combat. Lord Morley in like manner gave the Earl of Salisbury the lie. Other lords joined and threw down their gauntlets or their hoods as gages of the combat. No less than twenty pledges were thrown in support of the charge against Albemarle, and no one took his part except the Duke of Surrey. The gages, however, were given into the custody of the Constable and Marshal of England until the King should appoint a day of trial; and meanwhile it was adjudged in Parliament that the lords who had appealed the Duke of Gloucester should be deprived of the dignities that had been conferred upon them after his death. Albemarle, Surrey, and Exeter were to be no longer dukes, but, as they had been before, Earls of Rutland, Kent, and Huntingdon. John Beaufort, Marquis of Dorset, was to be no longer a marquis, and Spenser, Earl of Gloucester, was to lose his title entirely. Not a few were dissatisfied that they did not lose their heads as well.

2. But it was very necessary on all accounts that matters should not be pushed to extremity. Severe justice would not have suited the new King's policy, and appeals of treason which had already been the cause of so many revolutions threatened to make the peace of the kingdom hopeless for ever. An act was accordingly passed to mitigate the evil by forbidding such appeals in Parliament. All treasons done within the realm were henceforth to be tried by law; and where the crime was alleged to have been done abroad, the appeal was to be tried by the Constable and Marshal of England. At the same time the guilt of

Laws of treason mitigated.

treason was limited to offences that had been recognised as such by statute. It was also remembered that there had been arbitrary measures during the late reign which were not due to Richard himself. The shameful statute of the Merciless Parliament, making it treason in anyone to attempt to procure the repeal of its enactments, was annulled. Government by terror was henceforth to be disused. But the Commons were by no means invariably successful in obtaining redress for past abuses. When they petitioned for repayment of Richard's forced loans, and for remission of the heavy penalties incurred by the judges who had been so cruelly fined and banished for supporting Richard's prerogative, their requests were politely refused, with the answer *Le Roy s'avisera.*

3. As to the late King Richard himself, he was now a subject, and had been publicly declared in Parliament guilty of serious misconduct. What was to be done with him? A deputation of lords, with the Archbishop of Canterbury at their head, urged the King to put him to death, but Henry firmly refused to do so. Still, as he was no longer a sovereign, he was amenable to the judgment of the King and Parliament; so it was decreed that he should be imprisoned for life, and Henry shut him up in the castle of Pomfret.

The deposed King Richard.

4. But not many months passed away before the King received intelligence of a formidable conspiracy against him in Richard's favour. It was formed by the degraded peers Rutland, Kent, and Huntingdon who had been formerly dukes, and Lord Spenser, formerly Earl of Gloucester, with the Earl of Salisbury and some other noblemen, including the Bishop of Carlisle, who had always been a staunch friend to Richard. These all dined together in the chambers of the Abbot of Westminster a few days before Christmas,

Conspiracy in his favour.

and set their seals to certain indentures promising to be faithful to one another in what they were to undertake. On Sunday, the 4th of January, they made an attempt to surprise the King at Windsor; but one of their number had already betrayed the secret, and Henry had escaped to London. The traitor was the Earl of Rutland, formerly Duke of Albemarle, who had before shamefully abandoned Richard in the day of his adversity. The others, finding that the King was gone, very naturally took alarm. They, however, visited Richard's Queen at Sonning, near Reading, and passed on westward to Cirencester, proclaiming King Richard as they went along. But the mayor summoned the country people, attacked them in the middle of the night, and after some hours' fighting compelled them to surrender. The Earls of Kent and Salisbury were beheaded by the people; Lord Spenser met with the same fate from the inhabitants of Bristol; and the Earl of Huntingdon, who, apart from his confederates, had awaited the issue of the affair at London, having fled into the county of Essex, was taken and beheaded at Pleshy, the mansion of the murdered Duke of Gloucester.

A.D. 1400. January 4.

5. Every one of these executions was an act of summary justice, the people taking the law into their own hands as they had done under Wat Tyler. But mob law, perhaps, was not displeasing to Henry when it tended to the suppression of rebellion. He was unquestionably popular with the masses, who believed that he had been a victim of political perfidy in the preceding reign, and they warmly took his part against any attempt to bring back the detested tyrant of whose exactions they had formerly stood in dread. Indeed, Henry himself, after this, seems to have dismissed the scruples he had before professed to entertain about putting his rival to death. It would be rash, perhaps, to say that he distinctly autho-

rised his murder; but it appears pretty evident that he was no longer careful to preserve his life. Within little more than a month after the rising, Richard died in his prison. It was pretended by some that on hearing of the failure of the conspiracy he wilfully starved himself to death; but there is not a little reason to suspect that he was starved by his keepers. Another story, however, got abroad that he was assassinated by Sir Piers Exton. Whatever may have been the mode of death, his body was sent up to London and exposed to public view, with the face uncovered from the forehead downwards. Funeral rites, attended by the King himself, were celebrated for him at St. Paul's, and he was buried at Langley. In the next reign the body was removed by order of Henry V. to Westminster, and was buried among the kings of England.

Death of Richard II.

6. Just after the death of Richard, Henry found himself at war with Scotland. A Scottish nobleman, the Earl of March, disappointed of a hope held out to him by the Scotch king of marrying his daughter to the heir-apparent, and smarting besides from other injuries, had fled from his country and taken refuge with the Earl of Northumberland in England. From the English Border he made inroads into Scotland, devastating the lands of his great rival the Earl Douglas, and King Robert III. made application to Henry for his surrender as a traitor. But Henry determined to anticipate the hostile measures of the Scots, and after renewing the old claims of his predecessors by summoning King Robert to come and do him homage as his vassal, marched an army across the Borders and invaded the northern kingdom in person. The Scots, however, pursuing their usual policy, retired as he advanced; and Henry marched on to Edinburgh without opposition. He laid siege to Edinburgh Castle, which was in the

Henry invades Scotland.

hands of the King's son, the Duke of Rothesay. An army under the Duke of Albany, the King's brother, who had been made governor of the kingdom, lay at some distance, ready to come to the rescue if occasion should require it; but the Scots trusted to famine to compel the English to withdraw, and left them unattacked. This policy proved successful; after a short time Henry found it necessary to raise the siege of Edinburgh Castle and return home. The expedition in one sense was a failure; but Henry had at least impressed the Scots with a sense of his warlike character. What is still more to his credit, he impressed them with a sense of his humanity by protecting the unoffending inhabitants from violence and outrage, a moderation of which former wars afforded them no experience.

II. *Eastern Affairs.*

1. When Henry had been a year upon the throne he received a visit from the Emperor of Constantinople, Manuel Palæologus, who had traversed Europe seeking aid from Christian princes against the Turks. The event was of a character quite unprecedented, and excited a remarkable degree of interest. The Eastern potentate was met by the King at Blackheath and conducted with peculiar honours into London, where he was magnificently entertained for the space of two or three months. The project of a crusade to the Holy Land was quite of a character to recommend itself to Henry, for he was deeply imbued with the notions of Christian chivalry. Even before he came to the throne, when he was only Earl of Derby, he had gone, like Chaucer's knight, against the infidels of Lithuania, and he doubtless regarded a visit to the Holy Land as the best atonement he could make for sin. But there were special circumstances at

The Emperor of Constantinople in England.

this time which drew the attention of Europe towards the East more than had been the case since the great days of the Crusades. The cause of the Greek emperor who was Henry's guest was the cause of Christianity in the East; and never had the prospects of Christianity been a subject of so much anxiety. The dominions of the Turk already covered the greater portion of the territory that they do at the present day, while Constantinople itself, was now all that remained of the once powerful Eastern empire. Yet even Constantinople had been besieged, and though not entirely won, a suburb had been actually given up to the enemy. Unless European princes would combine, a Christian empire in the East was a thing that could not live much longer.

Victorious career of the Sultan Bajazet.

2. The Sultan by whose extraordinary energy these results had come about was Bajazet, the first of that name, appropriately surnamed Ilderim, or the Lightning. From the beginning of his reign in 1389 he had been continually moving about at the head of armies, and men were amazed at the rapidity with which he passed and repassed between Europe and Asia, subduing petty Mahometan princes, or making war on the confines of Hungary against armies in which was gathered the flower of Christendom. In 1396 he had defeated at Nicopolis an army of 100,000 men under Sigismund, King of Hungary, who by an appeal to Europe had gathered to his standard many of the bravest knights in Germany and France. The greater part of that magnificent army was cut to pieces or driven into the Danube; of the prisoners taken, all but twenty-four nobles were put to death; and Sigismund himself, having escaped by water to Constantinople, only returned to Hungary after a long and perilous circuit.

3. But there was another great conqueror in Asia whose achievements eclipsed even those of Bajazet; and

while Manuel was making fruitless appeals to the princes of Western Europe, Constantinople was saved from capture by a Mahometan. Timour, commonly called Tamerlane, a native of Central Asia, was by birth a Tartar, but a descendant of the great Mongol emperor Genghis Khan, the traditions of whose power and greatness he was ambitious to revive. With a mind highly cultivated in many respects, he was not neglectful of those practices by which Eastern despots knew how to inspire respect. As monuments of his victories he would leave behind him pyramids of human heads. From his native district, not far south of Samarcand, he extended his dominions first on the side of Persia, which he completely annexed to his rule. He then carried his arms into Eastern and Western Tartary, and made inroads into Russia nearly as far as Moscow; after which he crossed the Indus, captured Delhi, and overran the North-eastern provinces of India about the time that Henry IV. was ejecting Richard from the throne of England. But from India he was drawn towards Georgia and the shores of the Black Sea by jealousy of the increasing power of Bajazet. He did not, however, at once come into open conflict with his rival. He made the Christians of Georgia tributary, took Sivas on the borders of Anatolia, then marched southwards, intending to make war upon the Mamelukes in Egypt; but after the capture and destruction of Aleppo and Damascus he changed his plan, returned to the Euphrates, laid Bagdad in ruins, and erected upon its site a pyramid of 90,000 heads.

Tamerlane the Tartar.

4. He now marched against Bajazet with an army of 800,000 men, to which his rival could oppose but half the number. The two great conquerors met at Angora in Asia Minor, where the army of Bajazet was completely overthrown and him-

Battle of Angora, 1402.

self taken prisoner. A curious story is told of the interview which took place after the battle between the captive Sultan and his conqueror. Timour was lame from a wound in the thigh received in one of his early battles. Bajazet was blind. On seeing his prisoner, Timour, it is said, could not refrain from laughing. 'Surely,' he remarked, 'God does not hold the empires of this world in very high estimation when he commits them to a blind man like you and a lame one like myself!'

5. There is a great deal of uncertainty as to many particulars connected with this victory. Accounts vary very much as to the day and month and even as to the year when the battle was fought; but the most critical opinion seems to be that it was on July 28, 1402. The Emperor of Constantinople, who took his leave of the King of England and returned to the Continent in the spring of the preceding year, could scarcely have anticipated this good news; but it is said that he had heard some encouraging rumours before he left of successes in the East against the infidels and of the conversion of a large number of pagans to Christianity. There is no doubt, however, that the defeat of blind Bajazet by the limping Tamerlane was an immense relief to Europe. The Tartar despot was looked upon as if he were almost a Christian prince, and so highly was his victory esteemed that even Henry IV. wrote to him from England to congratulate him.

III. *Owen Glendower's Rebellion and the Battle of Shrewsbury.*

1. At home, however, Henry was troubled with conspiracies and rebellions from the very commencement of his reign; nor did the death of his rival Richard render them less frequent. Not long after that event a rumour

got abroad that Richard was still alive and was in Scotland. It seems that he had a chaplain who resembled him in features, and many affected to believe that the body shown as his was not really that of the deposed King. This shadow of King Richard was more troublesome to Henry than Richard himself could have been if he had lived. Repeated proclamations were issued against the dissemination of false news, but the reports were still propagated, and a man said to be Richard II. was maintained at the Court of Scotland to give England trouble. The rumour in fact was very readily listened to by many, and was found a very excellent means for nursing disaffection. Henry required the most incessant watchfulness and policy to guard himself against these intrigues. Even his own palace was not secure against a secret enemy. In 1401 an iron with three spikes was laid in the King's bed. In 1402 a bastard son of the Black Prince named Sir Roger Clarendon and nine Franciscan friars were put to death for declaring that Richard was alive. And in the same year broke out the formidable rebellion of Owen Glendower in Wales.

Rumours spread that King Richard is still alive.

2. Since the day when it was conquered by Edward I. Wales had given the kings of England very little trouble. The Welsh remained loyal to the son and grandson of their conqueror, and were the most devoted friends of Richard II., even when he had lost the hearts of his English subjects. But on the usurpation of Henry their allegiance seems to have been shaken: and Owen Glendower, who was descended from Llewelyn, the last native prince of Wales, laid claim to the sovereignty of the country. He ravaged the territory of Lord Grey of Ruthin, and took him prisoner near Snowdon; then, turning southwards, overran Herefordshire and defeated and took prisoner

A.D. 1402. Owen Glendower's rebellion.

Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to that young Earl of March, who should have been heir to the crown after Richard according to the true order of descent. In this battle upwards of a thousand Englishmen were slain, and such was the fierce barbarity of the victors that even the women of Wales mutilated the dead bodies in a manner too gross to be described, and left them unburied upon the field till heavy sums were paid for their interment.

3. It was necessary to put down this revolt of Glendower, and the King collected an army and went against him in person. It was the beginning of September; but owing, as the people thought, to magical arts and enchantments practised by the Welshman, the army suffered dreadfully from tempests of wind, rain, snow, and hail before it could reach the enemy. In one night the King's tent was blown down, and he himself would have been killed if he had not retired to rest with his armour on. Finally the enterprise had to be abandoned. The Scots, meanwhile, thinking it a good opportunity to requite the King of England for his invasion of their country while his forces were engaged against the Welsh, made an irruption into Northumberland. They were, however, pursued on their retreat by the Earl of Northumberland and his son Henry Percy, commonly named Hotspur, who compelled them to come to an engagement at Homildon Hill near Woolet, when they were put to flight and their leader the Earl Douglas was taken prisoner.

A.D. 1402. Battle of Homildon Hill, Sept. 14.

4. This success might have seemed a slight compensation for the failure of the expedition against Glendower; but unfortunately the victors at Homildon Hill at this time found cause of offence with Henry. Of the two distinguished prisoners in Wales, the Lord Grey of Ruthin was ransomed by his friends for a sum of 10,000 marks;

but when the kinsmen of Sir Edmund Mortimer proposed to ransom him, the King expressly forbade them. He pretended that Mortimer had shown symptoms of disaffection, and had given himself up a willing prisoner to the King's enemies. The truth was, the young Earl of March was in the King's keeping, and Henry was not sorry that the only relation who could do much to advance his pretensions to the throne should be in the keeping of Owen Glendower. But this injustice only served to alienate some who had been the King's friends hitherto, among whom was Harry Hotspur; for Hotspur had married Mortimer's sister. He entered into a secret understanding with the Welsh prince, and drew into the conspiracy his father, the Earl of Northumberland, and his uncle, Thomas Percy Earl of Worcester.

5. It was a strange revolt, seeing that the Percys had been greatly instrumental to Henry's success against Richard. The reader, no doubt, has not forgotten the part taken by the Earl of Northumberland in bringing the deposed King into Henry's power; and Henry for his part exhibited such marks of confidence that he had committed to the Earl of Worcester the care of his son Henry Prince of Wales. But Worcester suddenly withdrew himself from Court and joined his nephew in the north, where they published manifestoes still pretending loyalty, professing that they had only been driven to take up arms in self-defence, as there were certain abuses which required reform, but owing to prejudices raised against them in the King's mind by their personal enemies, they dared not visit him. The King endeavoured to meet this by an offer of safe-conduct to Worcester and others to come to him and return freely; but instead of doing so, he and his nephew hastened towards Wales to join Glendower, spreading reports as they went that King Richard was alive and that they had taken up arms in

A.D. 1403.

his cause. The Percys had set their prisoner the Earl Douglas free, and expected that Owen Glendower would do the like to his prisoner, Sir Edmund Mortimer, and that they would all unite their forces against Henry. But the King was not unprepared, and having gathered a sufficient force, intercepted the march of the Percys at Shrewsbury. A very fierce and bloody battle took place, in which Hotspur was killed, the Earl Douglas again taken prisoner, and the insurgents utterly defeated. The Earl of Worcester was beheaded at Shrewsbury after the fight, and Northumberland, who had not yet openly joined the rebels, on marching southwards, was stopped by an army under the Earl of Westmoreland, and withdrew again into the north. The King afterwards coming to York commanded Northumberland to meet him, and ordered him into confinement for life as a traitor; but a few months later the earl obtained a full pardon, and his attainder was reversed in Parliament.

A.D. 1403. Battle of Shrewsbury, July 21.

6. Thus by a hard-won victory Henry had preserved himself upon a throne which he had acquired by intrigue and usurpation. But rebellion was not at an end. Glendower continued as troublesome as ever, and the King was unable from various causes to make much progress against him. At one time money could not easily be raised for the expedition. At another time, when he actually marched into the borders of Wales, his advance was again impeded by the elements. The rivers swelled to an unusual extent, and the army lost a great part of its baggage by the suddenness of the inundation. The French, too, sent assistance to Glendower, and took Carmarthen Castle. Some time afterwards the King's son, Henry Prince of Wales, succeeded in taking the castle of Aberystwith; but very soon after Owen Glendower recovered it

A.D. 1405.

A.D. 1407.

by stealth. In short, the Welsh succeeded in maintaining their independence of England during this whole reign, and Owen Glendower ultimately got leave to die in peace.

7. Another source of danger to Henry was the young Earl of March, whom he kept in prison. Many sympathised with his cause and resented the treatment of a prince whose natural claim to the throne was much better than that of Henry himself. So by the aid of friends who procured forged keys, he and his brother made their escape from Windsor Castle where they were confined; but they were soon recaptured. New confederacies again sprang up in the north, to which, notwithstanding his pardon, the Earl of Northumberland became a party. His associates were Mowbray the Earl Marshal, who was the son of Henry's old rival the Duke of Norfolk, the Lord Bardolf, and Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York. This archbishop, a man much beloved by the people, was brother to one of King Richard's favourites—the Earl of Wiltshire, whom Henry had put to death at Bristol. His dislike of Henry's government was undisguised; for he had accused the King of perjury and treason to King Richard, and had advocated the claims of the Earl of March. The confederates caused manifestoes to be set on the doors of churches and monasteries, and a considerable body of men gathered to their standard in Yorkshire. But the Archbishop and the Earl Marshal were entrapped into a conference with the Earl of Westmoreland, and were taken and beheaded at York. The former was venerated by the people as a martyr, and pilgrimages began to be made to his tomb, but were very speedily put down by order of the King. The Earl of Northumberland retired for a time into Scotland, but afterwards fled with Lord Bardolf

A.D. 1405. February.

Another rising in the North.

into Wales; from which country, two years after, these two noblemen escaped and raised an unsuccessful rebellion in Yorkshire. The earl was killed in battle and his head was stuck upon London Bridge. The Lord Bardolf was taken in the same fight, mortally wounded.

A.D. 1408.

IV. *Capture of Prince James of Scotland.*

1. Amid commotions such as these, nearly the whole reign of Henry IV. was spent. The intervals were few in which 'frighted peace' could find a time

> To pant,
> And breathe short-winded accents of new broils.[1]

However popular may have been Henry's usurpation, however arbitrary and tyrannical the government of his predecessor, the power of the Crown had been weakened by the fact of a usurpation having taken place. And young as Henry was when he assumed the crown—for he was exactly the same age as his cousin Richard whom he displaced—these repeated rebellions overtaxed his energies and wore out his strength prematurely. They also compelled him, much against his will, to make continual application to Parliament for supplies, which were often grudgingly and insufficiently conceded. An extraordinary subsidy was granted to him by the Parliament which met in the beginning of the year 1404, in which everyone who held lands of the value of twenty shillings and upwards was charged a shilling in the pound on the annual value. But this concession was made with a special request that it might not be drawn into a precedent, and with the very peculiar stipulation that the records of the receipt of the money might be

Heavy taxation.

[1] Shakespeare's 'Henry IV.,' Part I.

destroyed as soon as it was gathered in. Yet the proceeds of the tax proved quite inadequate to meet the pressing wants of the King's exchequer; and in October of the very same year another Parliament was called, to meet at Coventry. This Parliament, owing to the mode in which it was elected, and possibly by the character of some of its proposals, gained for itself the name of the Lack-learning Parliament. A clause was inserted in the writs of summons, requiring that no lawyer should be returned in any county as knight of the shire. When the question of supply came before the Commons it was thought that the readiest way to relieve an overtaxed people was to throw the burdens of the nation upon the clergy, and a general confiscation of the property of the Church was seriously recommended. This brought about a collision between the two Houses; but the Chancellor, Archbishop Arundel, altogether confuted the arguments in which the Speaker of the House of Commons endeavoured to show that the clergy did not contribute their fair share to the national burdens, and the proposal had to be abandoned. Two tenths and two fifteenths were then voted in its place.

2. To strengthen himself on his unsteady throne, Henry courted alliances with foreign princes by marriage and other means. Soon after the beginning of his reign, he himself, being then a widower, married Joan of Navarre, widow of Simon de Montfort, Duke of Brittany. He had already, by his former wife Mary de Bohun, four sons and two daughters; and he married his eldest daughter Blanche to Lewis of Bavaria, eldest son of the Emperor Rupert, in the very same year in which he himself took a second wife. Some time afterwards he married his second daughter Philippa to Eric IX., King of Denmark.

Foreign alliances.

3. But fortune threw into Henry's hands an advantage

to which he could not have attained by mere diplomacy. Of all the foreign powers whose enmity he had to fear, Scotland, though certainly one of the least, might have given him the most annoyance. It was Scotland that harboured the false King Richard, and which received with open arms the Earl of Northumberland and other Englishmen whenever they were disaffected towards their sovereign. Yet the only security against Scotland hitherto lay in the doubtful fidelity of the northern lords,—men like Northumberland himself or Westmoreland, unscrupulous and changeable, who feeling themselves masters of the situation, fought for their sovereign or conspired against him as they pleased. But in the year 1405 an incident occurred which at once relieved Henry of all anxiety about the Scots for the remainder of his days.

4. Scotland at this time was in a deplorable condition. Robert III., who is characterised by historians as a well-intentioned king, was singularly devoid of energy. His brother, the Duke of Albany, whom he himself had named as governor, secretly aspired to the succession, but the King relied upon him with a blind confidence. David, Duke of Rothesay, the heir apparent, was a dissolute, licentious prince, and his intrigues with married ladies occasioned so much scandal that the King thought proper to commit him to the keeping of his uncle. Albany imprisoned the young man in his own castle at Falkland in Fife, where he was miserably starved to death in a dungeon. It is said that two women for some days protracted his unhappy life; the one by covertly passing through the narrow window of his cell supplies of oatmeal cakes; the other, a country nurse, by conveying milk from her own breast to his mouth through a tube. But they were both detected and put to death. The poor King was over-

Scotland.

A.D. 1401.

whelmed with grief at the news of his son's murder, but Albany had a plausible story to lay the guilt on others, and was too powerful to be brought to justice. All that the King could do was to provide for the safety of his second son James; and on taking advice of such as he believed trustworthy, he resolved to send him to France to be educated at the court of Charles VI. Accompanied by one or two Scotch noblemen, the young prince set sail from the Bass rock at the mouth of the Frith of Forth. On his passage he came near the English coast, or, as some say, was driven to land. Notwithstanding that a truce then existed between the two realms, he was taken by some Norfolk sailors and brought to Henry, who seeing the importance of this capture, resolved to detain him. He had been provided with letters from his father to the King, to be used in case of his landing in England; but Henry jestingly remarked that if the Scots had been friendly they would have sent the young man to him for his education, as he knew the French tongue quite as well as King Charles.

A.D. 1405.

Prince James of Scotland taken by the English.

5. The news of this final calamity was too much for the old King of Scots, who died the third day after it was reported to him. The government of Scotland, though not the name of king, fell into the hands of the Duke of Albany, who was by no means anxious that the captive should be set free. Henry, however, made the detention of the young prince as little galling to him as possible, and gave him an excellent education, of which Scotland in after days reaped the benefit. He was the first of the Scotch kings named James, and was distinguished not only as a very enlightened king but as a poet, some of whose works were above mediocrity.

V. *The Church—French Affairs—Death of Henry IV.*

1. King Henry was now solicited to take part along with France in putting an end to the papal schism which had so long troubled the world. On the death of Pope Innocent VII. in 1406, the cardinals at Rome, before proceeding to a new election, made a compact that whoever should be elected Pope should abdicate if the anti-Pope would do the same, so as to allow the rival colleges to coalesce in the election of one pontiff. The election fell upon the Cardinal St. Mark, who thereupon assumed the title of Gregory XII., and bound himself by oath after his election to fulfil the agreement to which he had already given his consent as cardinal. He accordingly a few months later made preparations to go to Savona, where he was to hold a conference with his rival as to the proposed renunciation of their dignities. But the King of Naples took advantage of his intended departure to march on Rome; and though he was driven back by Paolo Orsini, the occurrence served as an excuse to the Pope for not fulfilling his engagement. After a time it became evident that the Pope had no real intention to resign, and the Cardinal of Bordeaux was sent over to England by the college at Avignon to represent the bad faith of Pope Gregory and to solicit Henry's assistance in referring the affairs of the Church to a general council to be held at Pisa. To this Henry readily agreed, and with the general consent of Christendom the council was held at Pisa in 1409, when both Pope Gregory and the anti-Pope were deposed, and a new pope elected who took the name of Alexander V.

The schism in the papacy.

2. At this time the religious condition of England was still very strongly affected by the teaching of Wy-

cliffe. The influence of his opinions, however, was not quite what it had been. In the days of King Richard it was said that you could hardly see two persons together in the street but one of them was a Lollard. John of Gaunt was their avowed protector, and seems to have been himself a disciple of the bold reformer. And notwithstanding papal censures, the teaching of the Lollards was not in Richard's time visited with civil penalties. But when Henry came to the throne he found the necessity of supporting the authority of the Church. The clergy, too, were recovering their influence, and the votaries of Lollard doctrines were chiefly among the laity. Before the King had been two years upon the throne a very severe enactment was passed against heresy, by which for the first time it was ordained that a heretic should be committed to the flames. A case immediately occurred for putting this cruel statute into effect, and a clergyman named William Sawtré was burned in Smithfield as a Lollard. Nine years later a still more cruel case occurred at the same place of execution. A smith named Thomas Badby was burned for denying the Real Presence. The King's eldest son, Prince Henry, was present on the scene and, probably out of real compassion for the sufferer, endeavoured to persuade him to recant. This he steadily refused to do, and allowed himself to be closed in and the fire lit around him. In the midst of the flames, however, his courage failed, and he cried out for mercy. The Prince ordered the burning heaps to be removed and the man extricated; then promised, if he would retract his heresy, to give him threepence a day for life. But the poor man was now ashamed of his weakness, and refused to accept the prince's bounty. He was therefore again shut up and perished in the fire.

Heretics burned.

3. Nevertheless, the repeated attacks made in Par-

liament on the possessions of the clergy evince a strong feeling of animosity against the Church which must have been due to the prevalence of Lollard opinions in the community. We have already noticed the proposal of the Lack-learning Parliament for the confiscation of the Church's property. Although that proposal was withdrawn for the time it was renewed six years afterwards, and a bill to that effect actually passed the Commons at the very time that Badby suffered at Smithfield. It was seriously represented to the King that the revenues of the bishops, abbots, and priors were sufficient to maintain fifteen earls, 1,500 knights, and 6,200 esquires for the defence of the kingdom, besides 100 hospitals for the care of the infirm. The measure was rejected by the Lords, owing mainly to the opposition of Prince Henry; but the Commons did not desist from their efforts to impair the privileges of the Church. They first proposed to abolish episcopal jurisdiction in the case of clerical convicts; for it was at this time the privilege of bishops to retain in their own prisons clergymen who had been convicted of any crimes. Afterwards they endeavoured to procure a mitigation of the severe law already passed against the Lollards by which anyone found preaching heresy might be committed to prison without the King's writ or warrant. But all their efforts in these directions proved totally ineffectual.

Proposals to confiscate the possessions of the clergy.

4. Scarcely anything of domestic interest occurred during the last few years of Henry's reign. But the events which took place in the neighbouring kingdom of France were such as to excite no small degree of interest, and they had a most important bearing on the history of the succeeding reign. France was at this time torn by internal discords. For many years King Charles VI.—the same king who, being yet a young man, had assembled the great fleet at Sluys that was to have conquered England, had been

afflicted with hopeless insanity. His queen, Isabel of Bavaria, left him helpless in his malady, and lived in shameless adultery with Louis Duke of Orleans, who, being the King's own brother, aspired to govern everything. He was, however, hated by the Parisians for his immoralities, and more than all, for reasons personal and political, he was hated by the Duke of Burgundy, who was powerful over all the northern parts of France. On November 23, 1407, the Duke of Orleans was murdered in the streets of Paris, and when inquiry was made into the circumstances of the crime the Duke of Burgundy confessed that it had been done at his instigation. It was an act of peculiar treachery, for a seeming reconciliation had just been effected between the rivals, who had taken the sacrament together the previous Sunday and had agreed to dine together on the Sunday following. A son of the Duke of Orleans succeeded to his father's title and bent every effort to revenge his murder; but the King of France, under the guidance of his son, the heir-apparent, who had been entirely alienated from the Orleanist party and from his own mother, favoured the party of his opponent. The young Duke of Orleans, however, strengthened himself by marrying a daughter of the Count of Armagnac, and his whole party became known as the party of the Armagnacs. In short, these private feuds became national, and separated for many years the north and south of France into two hostile factions. During the days of Henry IV. the English at first favoured the party of the Duke of Burgundy, and a body of Englishmen helped to defeat the Orleanists in an engagement at St. Cloud. But afterwards the Duke of Orleans sent an embassy to England and induced Henry to send aid to him and abandon the party of his rival.

5. Things were in this state when Henry IV. died on March 20, 1413. For years he had been subject to epi-

leptic fits, brought on, doubtless, by the pressure of constant anxieties. Not only had his reign been troubled with incessant rebellions, but many conspiracies had been formed against his life. Sometimes the attempt had been made to put poison in his food; at other times his hose or his shirt was smeared with venom; sharp irons were cunningly laid within his bed, and other subtle means were employed to put an end to him. Secret enemies evidently lurked within his household and filled him with continual fear. Cutaneous eruptions also broke out upon his face, which some regarded as a judgment of God for the murder of Archbishop Scrope. His last attack overtook him in Westminster Abbey. He was carried into the abbot's lodging and expired in the Jerusalem Chamber,—the event, we are told, being regarded as the fulfilment of a misunderstood prophecy, which said that he was to die at Jerusalem. It was doubtless a real aspiration of Henry's to have ended his life in the Holy Land.

Death of Henry IV.

CHAPTER V.

HENRY V.

I. *Oldcastle and the Lollards.*

1. HENRY, the eldest son of the deceased King—a young man of six-and-twenty—succeeded at once to the crown which it had cost his father so much anxiety to keep. It is said that the latter, while he lay upon his death-bed, demanded of his heir-apparent how he proposed to defend such an ill-gotten possession; upon which the young prince replied that he would trust for that to his sword,

A.D. 1413.

Warlike character of Henry V.

as his father had done before him. This policy he pursued most successfully throughout his rather brief reign, and by brilliant achievements in arms and foreign conquest made the world forget the original weakness of the Lancastrian title. Already he had distinguished himself by his bravery in the war against Glendower, and more particularly in the battle of Shrewsbury, where he was wounded in the face with an arrow. His attendants would have carried him off the field, but he insisted rather on being led to the front of the battle to animate his followers; and it was probably his personal prowess that day that determined the issue. The Welsh, who had been so troublesome to his father, admired his valour and claimed him as a true prince of Wales, remembering that he had been born at Monmouth, which place was at that time within the principality. They discovered that there was an ancient prophecy that a prince would be born among themselves who should rule the whole realm of England; and they saw its fulfilment in King Henry V.

2. He was popular besides for other things than bravery. Young and handsome, with abundance of animal spirits, he delighted in feats of agility and strength. He was tall and slender in person, with rather a long neck and small bones—a frame admirably adapted to nimble exercises. So swift was he in running that he could run down and capture a wild buck in a park without dogs, bow, or weapon of any sort. His mental endowments, too, were above the average, and he had received an excellent education. He delighted in songs and music, was very affable, and mixed readily with the people; nor could he be restrained by the dull decorum of the court, like the heir-apparent of a long-settled dynasty. On many occasions he had displayed a love of frolic which gave rise to some degree of scandal. Sometimes he and his companions in dis-

His early life.

guise would waylay his own receivers and rob them of the rents they had collected from his tenants. When the receivers came to account with him afterwards he would enjoy their mortification in telling how they had lost the money, until he declared by whom they had been robbed and gave them a full discharge, with special rewards to those who had offered him the most valiant resistance. At another time one of his riotous comrades was brought before the Chief Justice for transgression of the law. The prince attended at the trial, and demanded that the offender should be set free. The judge refused to comply, observing that the prince might be able to obtain a pardon from the King his father, but that for his own part he must administer justice according to the laws. Young Henry, who was not satisfied to adopt such a roundabout method of procedure, threatened to rescue the man and laid his hand upon his sword, or, as some writers say, struck the Chief Justice with his fist. The judge, however, showed himself unmoved, and committed the prince to prison for contempt of court. This firmness produced a marked effect. The prince, who had a real respect for authority, became at once submissive and allowed himself to be taken into custody. And the King his father, being informed of the incident, thanked God for having given him so upright a judge and so obedient a son.

3. When he came to the throne he at once made it evident that it was from no insensibility to his high future destiny that he had indulged so freely the frolicsome humours of his youth. The men who had been the companions of his pleasures he immediately dismissed, giving them presents, but at the same time commanding them never again to come within ten miles of the Court. On the other hand, he took at once into his confidence the ministers of his

He dismisses his companions.

father, and showed a sagacity in the discussion of state affairs which they had not expected to find in a young man who had shown himself so fond of amusement. Everyone perceived that he was altogether an altered man, and everyone was loud in the praises of his wisdom, modesty, and virtue.

4. One party among his subjects, however, gave the new King trouble at the very commencement of his reign. From his conduct at the execution of Thomas Badby, the Lollards possibly may have expected to find in him a friend and protector. The chief man among them, Sir John Oldcastle (who, though remembered afterwards chiefly by his family surname, was by right of his wife Lord Cobham), belonged to the royal household, and was greatly esteemed by Henry for his integrity of character. But, either being disappointed in the King, or presuming too much on the influence of Lord Cobham, they began to put up seditious papers on the doors of the London churches, stating that a hundred thousand men would rise in arms against all who were not of their way of thinking. By this the clergy were stirred into activity, and in a convocation held at London it was found that the Lollards had been instigated to various irregularities by the protection afforded to them by Oldcastle. He had stirred up men to preach in various places without their having received a licence from their bishops, and had put down by violence all who protested against this irregularity, declaring that the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans had no right to make any regulations on the subject. He had also put forth opinions opposed to the teaching of the Church as to the Sacrament, penance, pilgrimages, the worship of images, and the power of the keys.

Sir John Oldcastle, a protector of the Lollards.

5. The clergy in convocation accordingly called upon

the Archbishop of Canterbury to take proceedings against Oldcastle. The primate, however, with a deputation of his clergy, first waited upon the King at Kennington. At Henry's request the matter was for some time put off in order that he might use his own personal influence to induce Oldcastle to desist from his opposition to the Church. But the King's efforts were useless; and the archbishop at length, with the King's consent, issued a citation against the offender. The messenger brought it to Cowling Castle in Kent, where Lord Cobham then resided, but the latter would not allow it to be served upon him, and it was posted on the doors of Rochester Cathedral. As he refused to appear on the day named, he was excommunicated as contumacious, and the King caused him to be apprehended and committed to the Tower. From thence he was brought in custody of the Lieutenant of the Tower before a spiritual court at St. Paul's, when the archbishop offered to absolve him from the sentence of excommunication. But Oldcastle declined to ask for absolution, and, turning to another subject, said he was ready to declare to the archbishop the articles of his belief.

Proceedings against him for heresy.

6. On this he drew from his bosom an indented parchment, read out the contents, and laid it before the Court. The archbishop said that the substance of his confession was orthodox enough, but that it did not contain anything explicit on the subject of those heresies that he was accused of propagating, and he desired that he would explain particularly his opinions touching the sacrament of the altar and the sacrament of penance. Oldcastle replied that he would make no further answer on these points than was contained in the document he had given in. The archbishop then set before him the opinions of St. Augustine and other saints, which he said

had been adopted by the Church, and which all good Catholics ought to accept. Oldcastle answered that he wished to believe in whatever Holy Church had determined and God had enjoined; but that the pope and cardinals and the bishops of the Church had any authority to decide these points he could not admit.

7. Being examined a second day he at length gave a pretty full statement of his opinions, and among other things declared that the pope, bishops, and friars constituted the head, members, and tail of Antichrist. After this the decision of the tribunal could not be doubtful. The courts and officers of the Church were unable to inflict any punishment on an offender except excommunication; but he was pronounced a heretic and delivered over, as the expression was, to the secular arm. Under the law passed in the preceding reign he was thus liable to be burnt; but his judges interceded with the King to grant him forty days' respite, during which it was hoped he might recant. During this interval, however, he effected his escape from the Tower, and very shortly afterwards his followers occasioned more than usual trouble. So many persons were apprehended for sedition and heresy that the gaols of London were full, and rumours of a most alarming conspiracy reached the King soon after Christmas.

8. A large meeting of Lollards from various parts of the kingdom had been secretly arranged to meet by night in St. Giles's Fields near London. Thousands of apprentices from the city were expected to join it. The design was said to be to seize, if not put to death, the King and his brothers, to proclaim Oldcastle Regent, and to destroy the monasteries of Westminster and St. Alban's, St. Paul's, and the houses of the friars in London. Oldcastle himself was expected to be present at the muster and to put himself at the head

Conspiracy of the Lollards.

of the insurgents. The world, perhaps, had yet to be convinced that the young King was competent to rule with a strong hand and maintain the House of Lancaster upon the throne of England. But Henry was fully equal to the emergency. The meeting, he learned, was to take place on Sunday night after Twelfth Day. He quietly removed from Eltham, where he had been keeping his Christmas, to the palace at Westminster, and there ordered a body of followers under arms to accompany him by night to the place of meeting. He at the same time commanded the gates of the city to be securely kept, so as to prevent anyone from leaving. On the news of his approach the rebels were thrown into consternation. A number of them were killed, and others taken prisoners. What became of Oldcastle, or whether he had actually been there, no one knew. The King offered a reward of 1,000 marks for his apprehension; but he was a popular hero, and no one could be induced to betray him. His unhappy followers were speedily put to execution; and some, who had been condemned for heresy as well as sedition, were not only hanged, but burnt at the same time, with the gallows from which they were suspended.

A.D. 1414, Jan. 7.

II. *The War with France and the Battle of Agincourt.*

1. During the first year of Henry's reign the unhappy King of France was induced to appeal to England and other countries against rebels within his own kingdom, lest they should obtain the assistance of foreign governments. We have already shown how the French nation was divided into the two hostile factions of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. But within the city of Paris a still more dangerous party was formed out of the populace with a few of the leading butchers at their head. From the name of their ringleader, one Caboche, whose

occupation consisted in flaying slaughtered animals, they were called the Cabochians. They wore white scarfs or hoods, and were at first secretly encouraged by the party of the Burgundians. But they soon became so powerful that for a time all authority was suspended. Paris lay at their mercy, and scenes were enacted not unlike those which had been witnessed in London under Wat Tyler. They took possession of the Bastille, broke into the house of the Dauphin, Louis Duke of Guienne, forced themselves into the King's presence, and took and imprisoned the Queen's brother, the Duke of Bavaria, with the Duke of Bar, a prince of the Blood Royal, all the ministers of state, and several ladies of the court. The King was obliged to wear in public a white scarf and to make ordinances for the reform of abuses, while the bodies of some unpopular noblemen and ministers, who were alleged by the insurgents to have put an end to their own lives, were exhibited upon a gibbet.

The Cabochians in Paris.

2. This revolution took place at the end of April in the year 1413, little more than a month after the death of Henry IV. of England. The government of the Cabochians, however, did not last long. The princes of the Blood and the university of Paris combined to put an end to their usurpation. Order was restored under the Duke of Orleans, to whom the King now gave his confidence, and the Duke of Burgundy withdrew into Flanders. The war between the two factions was renewed, and each party sought to strengthen itself by an alliance with England. Henry, for his part, saw his advantage in the divided state of the country, and negotiated with both parties at one and the same time. He even sent and received embassies to and from both parties on the subject of his own marriage, proposing on the one hand to ally

Henry takes advantage of the divisions in France.

himself with a daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, on the other, with a daughter of the King of France. At length he suddenly revived the claim made by Edward III., asserted his own right to the French crown, and required Charles at once to yield up possession of his kingdom, or at least to make immediate surrender of all that had been ceded to England by the treaty of Bretigni (see Map I.), together with the duchy of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and a number of other provinces.

3. The claim made by Edward III. to the French crown had been questionable enough. That of Henry was certainly most unreasonable. Edward had maintained that though the Salic law, which governed the succession in France, excluded females from the throne, it did not exclude their male descendants. On this theory Edward himself was doubtless the true heir to the French monarchy. But even admitting the claims of Edward, his rights had certainly not descended to Henry V., seeing that even in England neither he nor his father was true heir to the throne by lineal right. A war with France, however, was sure to be popular with his subjects, and the weakness of that country from civil discord seemed a favourable opportunity for urging the most extreme pretensions.

His claim to the kingdom.

4. To give a show of fairness and moderation the English ambassadors at Paris lessened their demands more than once, and appeared willing for some time to renew negotiations after their terms had been rejected. But in the end they still insisted on a claim, which in point of equity was altogether preposterous, and rejected a compromise which would have put Henry in possession of the whole of Guienne and given him the hand of the French king's daughter Catherine with a marriage portion of 800,000 crowns. Meanwhile Henry was making active preparations for war, and at the same time carried

on secret negotiations with the Duke of Burgundy, trusting to have him for an ally in the invasion of France.

5. At length in the summer of 1415 the King had collected an army and was ready to embark at Southampton. But on the eve of his departure a conspiracy was discovered, the object of which was to dethrone the King and set aside the House of Lancaster. The conspirators were Richard Earl of Cambridge, Henry Lord Scrope of Masham, and a knight of Northumberland named Sir Thomas Grey. The Earl of Cambridge was the King's cousin-german, and had been recently raised to that dignity by Henry himself. Lord Scrope was, to all appearance, the King's most intimate friend and counsellor. The design seems to have been formed upon the model of similar projects in the preceding reign. Richard II. was to be proclaimed once more as if he had been still alive; but the real intention was to procure the crown for Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, the true heir of Richard whom Henry IV. had set aside. At the same time the Earl of March himself seems hardly to have countenanced the attempt; but the Earl of Cambridge, who had married his sister, wished, doubtless, to secure the succession for his son Richard, as the Earl of March had no children. Evidently it was the impression of some persons that the House of Lancaster was not even yet firmly seated upon the throne. Perhaps it was not even yet apparent that the young man who had so recently been a gamesome reveller, was capable of ruling with a firm hand as king. A.D. 1415.

6. But all doubt on this point was soon terminated. The conspirators were tried by a commission hastily issued, and were summarily condemned and put to death. The Earl of March, it is said, revealed the plot to the King, sat as one of the judges of his two brother peers, and was taken into the King's favour. The Earl of

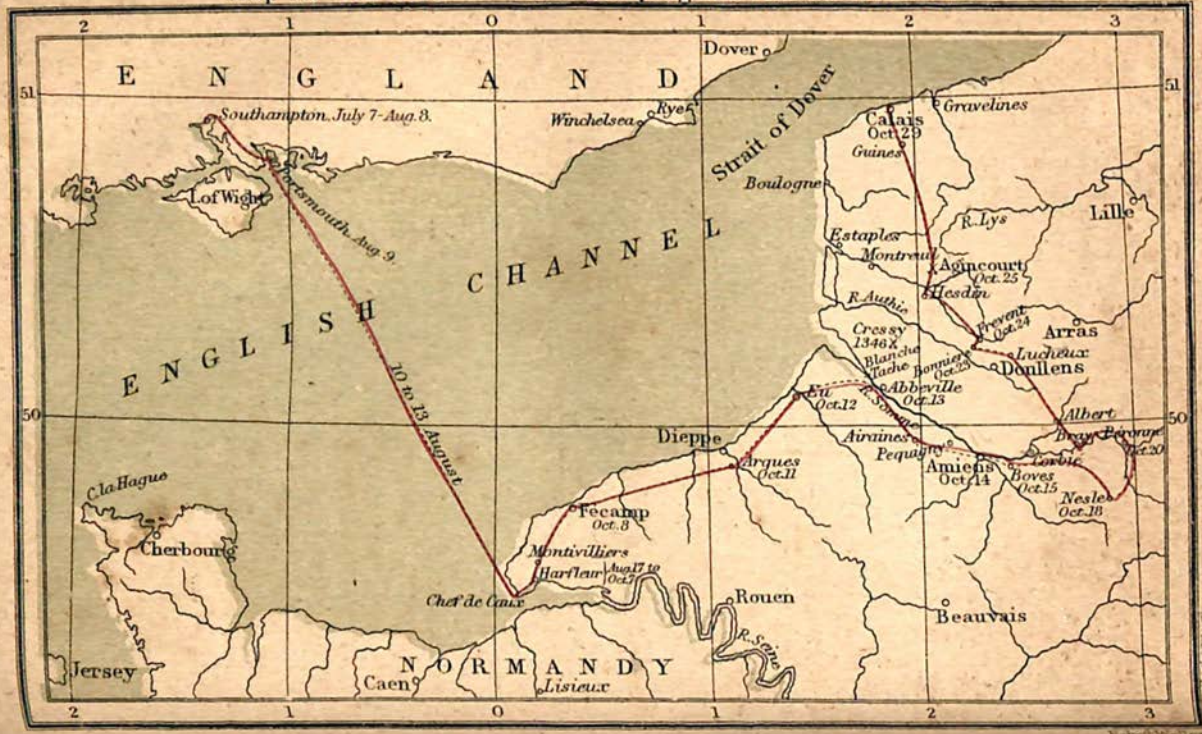
Cambridge made a confession of his guilt. Lord Scrope, though he repudiated the imputation of disloyalty, admitted having had a guilty knowledge of the plot, which he said it had been his purpose to defeat. The one nobleman, in consideration of his royal blood was simply beheaded; the other was drawn and quartered. We hear of no more attempts of the kind during Henry's reign.

7. With a fleet of 1,500 sail Henry crossed the sea and landed without opposition at Chef de Caux, near Harfleur, at the mouth of the Seine. The force that he brought with him was about 30,000 men, and he immediately employed it in laying siege to Harfleur. The place was strong, so far as walls and bulwarks could make it, but it was not well victualled, and after a five weeks' siege it was obliged to capitulate. But the forces of the besiegers were thinned by disease as well as actual fighting. Dysentery had broken out in the camp, and, though it was only September, they suffered bitterly from the coldness of the nights; so that when the town had been won and garrisoned, the force available for further operations amounted to less than half the original strength of the invading army. Under the circumstances it was hopeless to expect to do much before the winter set in, and many counselled the King to return to England. But Henry could not tolerate the idea of retreat or even of apparent inaction. He sent a challenge to the Dauphin, offering to refer their differences to single combat; and when no notice was taken of this proposal, he determined to cut his way, if possible, through the country to Calais, along with the remainder of his forces.

Sept. 22.

8. It was a difficult and hazardous march. Hunger, dysentery, and fever had already reduced the little band to less than 9,000 men, or, as good authorities say, to

Map of HENRY Vs First Campaign in France A.D. 1415



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little more than 6,000. The country people were unfriendly, their supplies were cut off on all sides, and the scanty stock of provisions with which they set out was soon exhausted. For want of bread many were driven to feed on nuts, while the enemy harassed them upon the way and broke down the bridges in advance of them. On one or two occasions having repulsed an attack from a garrisoned town, Henry demanded and obtained from the governor a safe-conduct and a certain quantity of bread and wine, under threat of setting fire to the place if refused. In this manner he and his army gradually approached the river Somme at Blanche Tache, where there was a ford by which King Edward III. had crossed before the battle of Cressy. But while yet some distance from it, they received information from a prisoner that the ford was guarded by 6,000 fighting men, and though the intelligence was untrue, it deterred him from attempting the passage. They accordingly turned to the right and went up the river as far as Amiens, but were still unable to cross, till, after following the course of the river about fifty miles further, they fortunately came upon an undefended ford and passed over before their enemies were aware.

9. Hitherto their progress had not been without adventures and skirmishes in many places. But the main army of the French only overtook them when they had arrived within about forty-five miles of Calais. On the night of the 24th of October they were posted at the village of Maisoncelles, with an enemy before them five or six times their number, who had resolved to stop their further progress. Both sides prepared for battle on the following morning. The English, besides being so much inferior in numbers, were wasted by disease and famine, while their adversaries were fresh and vigorous, with a plentiful commissariat. But the latter were over-confi-

dent. They spent the evening in dice-playing and making wagers about the prisoners they should take; while the English, on the contrary, confessed themselves and received the sacrament. Heavy rain fell during the night, from which both armies suffered; but Henry availed himself of a brief period of moonlight to have the ground thoroughly surveyed. His position was an admirable one. His forces occupied a narrow field hemmed in on either side by hedges and thickets, so that they could only be attacked in front, and were in no fear of being surrounded. Early on the following morning Henry rose and heard mass; but the two armies stood facing each other for some hours, each waiting for the other to begin. The English archers were drawn up in front in the form of a wedge, and each man was provided with a stake shod with iron at both ends, which being fixed into the ground before him, the whole line formed a kind of hedge bristling with sharp points, to defend them from being ridden down by the enemy's cavalry. At length, however, Henry gave orders to commence the attack, and the archers advanced, leaving their stakes behind them fixed in the ground. The French cavalry on either side endeavoured to close them in, but were soon obliged to retire before the thick showers of arrows poured in upon them, which destroyed four-fifths of their numbers. Their horses then became unmanageable, being plagued with a multitude of wounds, and the whole army was thrown into confusion. Never was a more brilliant victory won against more overwhelming odds.

Oct. 25.

The Battle of Agincourt.

10. One sad piece of cruelty alone tarnished the glory of that day's action, but it seems to have been dictated by fear as a means of self-preservation. After the enemy had been completely routed in front and a multitude of prisoners taken, the King, hearing that some detachments

had got round to his rear and were endeavouring to plunder his baggage, gave orders to the whole army to put their prisoners to death. The order was executed in the most relentless fashion. One or two distinguished prisoners afterwards were taken from under heaps of slain, among whom were the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon. Altogether, the slaughter of the French was enormous. There is a general agreement that it was upwards of 10,000 men, and among them were the flower of the French nobility. That of the English was disproportionately small. Their own writers reckon it not more than 100 altogether, some absurdly stating it as low as twenty or thirty, while the French authorities estimate it variously from 300 to 1,600. Henry called his victory the battle of Agincourt from the name of a neighbouring castle. The army proceeded in excellent order to Calais, where they were triumphantly received, and after resting there a while recrossed to England. The news of such a splendid victory caused them to be welcomed with an enthusiasm that knew no bounds. At Dover the people rushed into the sea to meet the conquerors, and carried the King in their arms in triumph from his vessel to the shore. From thence to London his progress was like one continued triumphal procession, and the capital itself received him with every demonstration of joy.

III. *The Emperor Sigismund—Henry invades France a second time—The Foul Raid—Execution of Oldcastle.*

1. In the following spring Henry was honoured with a visit from Sigismund, King of the Romans and Emperor elect. His great object was to heal the divisions in Christendom, and he had already presided at one session of the Council of Constance which had been convoked by him for

A.D 1416. Visit of the Emperor Sigismund to England.

the purpose of terminating the schism in the papacy. At that session two of the rival popes, John XXIII. and Gregory XII., were persuaded to resign, and he had afterwards obtained from the third, Benedict XIII., an engagement to acknowledge the authority of the council. Before leaving Constance, too, he had, though most unwillingly, yielding to the solicitations of the divines, consented to the execution of John Huss, the Bohemian heretic, to whom he had given a safe-conduct. Extinguishing heresy was supposed to be a great means of promoting harmony among Christians, and he was taught by his spiritual instructors that he had no right to keep faith with the Church's enemies. But now he was on a mission to prevent war and bloodshed between two nations; for he wished to be the negotiator of peace between France and England, and Charles VI., whom he had visited on his way, had desired him to use his best efforts towards that end.

He becomes an ally of Henry.

2. If, however, he was at any time sincere in this intention, he very soon became convinced that a firm peace between the two countries was hopeless, and, as his stay in England was protracted he ceased to be a mediator and became more and more a partizan of Henry. Just before his arrival the Earl of Dorset, whom Henry had left as governor of Harfleur, overran the adjacent country up to the gates of Rouen. The Count of Armagnac, Constable of France, retaliated by laying siege to Harfleur by land and sea, and succeeded in reducing it to great extremities for want of victuals. Henry proposed to go thither with a fleet for its relief, but was dissuaded by the Emperor from hazarding his person in the enterprise, and gave the command of the squadron to his brother the Duke of Bedford, who soon took or sunk several of the enemy's vessels and compelled him to raise the siege. The Emperor highly

applauded the Duke of Bedford's gallantry, and becoming every day more cordial to Henry, at length entered into an offensive and defensive league with him against France. On the conclusion of his visit Henry accompanied him over to Calais.

3. To Calais John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, then came to pay a visit to the King and Emperor. From his past conduct it was naturally suspected that he was once more seeking to make an alliance with his country's enemies. So deeply, indeed, was he distrusted by the Court of France, that his assistance had not been asked to repel the English invasion, and he was accordingly not present at the battle of Agincourt, though two of his brothers died upon the field. He professed great anxiety to avenge their deaths, and, as if to do his country service, advanced towards Paris with a large body of followers. But the city of Paris remembered the rule of the Cabochians and kept him at a distance. Of course, when after this he went to Calais and conferred with the King of England, the worst possible inferences were drawn as to his intention. It appears, however, that he did not actually ally himself with Henry against France, but only concluded a truce with him for the counties of Flanders and Artois. He was more concerned to form an alliance within the kingdom against the Armagnacs, and for this purpose, after leaving Henry, he had conferences at Valenciennes with John, the second son of the French king, who had recently become dauphin by the death of his brother, Louis Duke of Guienne. The two princes made a firm alliance together, and the duke promised to aid the dauphin in defending the kingdom against the English. But before many months were over the new dauphin followed his brother to the grave. Charles, the third brother, who became dau-

The Duke of Burgundy.

A.D. 1417. April 4.

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phin in his place, was a boy of fourteen, completely under the control of the Count of Armagnac, who was now all-powerful. Suspicions were expressed that both his brothers had met with foul play in order that he might be heir-apparent. The last dauphin, indeed, had in all probability been poisoned. The Count of Armagnac ruled Paris with great despotism and cruelty by means of an army of Gascons; and the citizens at length began to form conspiracies in favour of the Duke of Burgundy. Queen Isabel herself relented towards her old enemy; but Armagnac sent her away to Tours and shut her up in prison. The Queen, however, declared herself Regent, protested against the assumption of authority by Armagnac, and ordered that the taxes he imposed should not be levied. The Duke of Burgundy made war in her behalf, released her from captivity and brought her back to Paris. Her son, the dauphin, whom she hated as an enemy, was obliged to leave the capital; and, as he also claimed to be regent, and disputed the authority of Burgundy and his own mother, the war was renewed in the provinces with as much violence as ever.

4. A kingdom in such a condition as this could not but be an easy prey to an invader. Henry crossed the sea once more and landed again in Normandy, at Toucques, near the mouth of the Seine, but on the opposite side to Harfleur. The Count of Armagnac had withdrawn most of the garrisons and placed them about Paris to act against the Duke of Burgundy, so that town after town submitted to the English with little or no resistance. And as Henry established good government wherever he advanced, enforcing respect for women and for property, the country was beyond all question benefited by the invasion. In the course of a few months the English were masters of the greater part of Normandy.

Henry invades France again. Aug. 1.

5. Meanwhile the Scots, following their usual policy, took advantage of the King's absence in France to attempt an inroad into the northern counties.' 'The Foul Raid.' The Duke of Albany, governor of Scotland, accompanied by the Earl Douglas—that same Douglas who had fought against Henry IV. at Homildon and Shrewsbury, and lost an eye in the former battle—laid siege to Roxburgh castle. The expedition—unless it was intended by Albany simply to irritate the English and confirm them in their determination to keep King James a prisoner—appears to have been singularly ill-planned. Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, who had gone on a pilgrimage to Bridlington, no sooner heard the news than he hurried to the Borders, collecting men upon his way, and joined with the northern barons to resist the invaders. Another army hastened northwards under John Duke of Bedford, the King's brother, who had been left as guardian of the kingdom in Henry's absence. But the Scots, finding that England was in a much better state to resist them than they had anticipated, abandoned the siege of Roxburgh, and shamefully returned home. The expedition reflected so little honour upon the country that it was called by the Scots themselves 'the Foul Raid,' and by that name is known in history. It was severely punished by the Warden of the Marches, who, during the next two years laid waste the whole of the eastern borders of Scotland, reducing Hawick, Selkirk, Jedburgh, and Dunbar to ashes.

6. By some it was insinuated that Sir John Oldcastle had been privy to this invasion. It was said that an emissary of the Scots had conferred with Oldcastle at Pomfret, and that Oldcastle had offered him a large sum of money if he would get his countrymen to bring the supposed King Richard with him into England. Such reports, of course, are evidence of nothing but the strong

feeling of aversion with which the Lollards were regarded; but as such they are significant. Oldcastle had now lain concealed from the King's officers for two years and a half; but about this time he narrowly escaped being apprehended at St. Alban's, after which he was actually captured on the lands of Lord Powis in Wales. He was at once brought up to London, and, as Parliament was then in session, he was put on trial before his peers. The old indictment was brought up against him, and he was condemned to death. The sentence was executed upon him in the same barbarous manner in which it had already been executed on some of his followers. He was taken to St. Giles's Fields where the rising had occurred in his favour nearly three years before; and there he was hung from a gallows by a great iron chain, and a fire being kindled beneath him he was burned to death.

Oldcastle apprehended and executed.

IV. *Siege and Capture of Rouen—Murder of the Duke of Burgundy—Treaty of Troyes.*

1. The progress of the English arms in France did not, for a long time, induce the rival factions in that country to suspend the civil war among themselves. But at length some feeble efforts were made towards a reconciliation. The Council of Constance having healed the divisions in the Church by the election of Martin V. as pope in place of the three rival popes deposed, the new pontiff despatched two cardinals to France to aid in this important object. By their mediation a treaty was concluded between the Queen, the Duke of Burgundy, and the dauphin; but it was no sooner published than the Count of Armagnac and his partisans made a vehement protest

A.D. 1418.

May 23.

against it and accused of treason all who had promoted it. On this Paris rose in anger, took part with the Burgundians, fell upon all the leading Armagnacs, put them in prison and destroyed their houses. The dauphin was only saved by one of Armagnac's principal adherents, Tannegui du Châtel, who carried him to the Bastille. The Bastille, however, was a few days after stormed by the populace, and Du Châtel was forced to withdraw with his charge to Melun. The Armagnac party, except those in prison, were entirely driven out of Paris. But even this did not satisfy the rage of the multitude. Riots continued from day to day, and a report being spread that the King was willing to ransom the captives, the people broke open the prisons and massacred every one of the prisoners. The Count of Armagnac, his chancellor, and several bishops and officers of state were the principal victims; but no one, man or woman, was spared. State prisoners, criminals, and debtors, even women great with child, perished in this indiscriminate slaughter.

The Parisians revolt against the Armagnacs, May 30.

June 4.

June 12.

2. Almost the whole of Normandy was by this time in possession of the English; but Rouen, the capital of the duchy, still held out. It was a large city, strongly fortified, but Henry closed it in on every side until it was reduced to capitulate by hunger. At the beginning of the siege the authorities took measures to expel the destitute class of the inhabitants, and several thousands of poor people were thus thrown into the hands of the besiegers, who endeavoured to drive them back into the town. But the gates being absolutely shut against them, they remained between the walls and the trenches, pitifully crying for help and perishing for want of food and shelter, until, on Christmas Day, when the siege had continued nearly five months, Henry

Siege of Rouen.

ordered food to be distributed to them 'in the honour of Christ's Nativity.' Those within the town, meanwhile, were reduced to no less extremities. Enormous prices were given for bread, and even for the bodies of dogs, cats, and rats. The garrison at length were induced to offer terms, but Henry for some time insisted on their surrendering at discretion. Hearing, however, that a desperate project was entertained of undermining the wall and suddenly rushing out upon the besiegers, he consented to grant them conditions, and the city capi-
A.D. 1419. Jan. 19. tulated on January 19. The few places that remained unconquered in Normandy then opened their gates to Henry; others in Maine and the Isle of France did the same, and the English troops entered Picardy on a further career of conquest.

3. Both the rival factions were now seriously anxious to stop the progress of the English, either by coming at once to terms with Henry, or by uniting together against him; and each in turn first tried the former course. The dauphin offered to treat with the King of England; but as Henry demanded the whole of those large possessions in the north and south of France which had been secured to Edward III. by the treaty of Bretigni, he felt that it was impossible to prolong the negotiation. The Duke of Burgundy then arranged a personal interview at Meulan between Henry on the one side and himself and the French queen on behalf of Charles, at which terms of peace were to be adjusted. The Queen brought with her the Princess Catherine her daughter, whose hand Henry himself had formerly demanded as one of the conditions on which he would have consented to forbear from invading France. It was now hoped that if he would take her in marriage he would moderate his other demands. But Henry, for his part, was altogether unyielding. He insisted on the terms of the treaty of Bretigni, and on

keeping his own conquests besides, with Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and the sovereignty over Brittany.

4. Demands so exorbitant the Duke of Burgundy did not dare to accept, and as a last resource, he and the dauphin agreed to be reconciled and to unite in the defence of their country against the enemy. They held a personal interview, embraced each other, and signed a treaty, by which they promised each to love the other as a brother, and to offer a joint resistance to the invaders. A further meeting was arranged to take place about seven weeks later to complete matters and to consider their future policy. France was delighted at the prospect of internal harmony and the hope of deliverance from her enemies. But at the second interview an event occurred which marred all her prospects once more. The meeting had been appointed to take place at Montereau, where the river Yonne falls into the Seine. The duke, remembering doubtless, how he himself had perfidiously murdered the Duke of Orleans, allowed the day originally appointed to pass by, and came to the place at last after considerable misgivings, which appear to have been overcome by the exhortations of treacherous friends. When he arrived he found a place railed in with barriers for the meeting. He nevertheless advanced, accompanied by ten attendants, and being told that the dauphin waited for him, he came within the barriers, which were immediately closed behind him. The dauphin was accompanied by one or two gentlemen, among whom was his devoted servant, Tannegui du Châtel, who had saved him from the Parisian massacre. This Tannegui had been formerly a servant of Louis Duke of Orleans, whose murder he had been eagerly seeking an opportunity to revenge; and as the Duke of Burgundy knelt before the dauphin, he struck him a violent blow on the

July 11.

Murder of the Duke of Burgundy.

head with a battle-axe. The attack was immediately followed up by two or three others, who, before the duke was able to draw his sword, had closed in around him and despatched him with a multitude of wounds.

5. The effect of this crime was what might have been anticipated. Nothing could have been more favourable to the aggressive designs of Henry, or more ruinous to the party of the dauphin, with whose complicity it had been too evidently committed. Philip, the son and heir of the murdered Duke of Burgundy, at once sought means to revenge his father's death. The people of Paris became more than ever enraged against the Armagnacs, and entered into negotiations with the King of England. The new Duke Philip and Queen Isabel did the same, the latter being no less eager than the former for the punishment of her own son. Within less than three months they made up their minds to waive every scruple as to the acceptance of Henry's most exorbitant demands. He was to have the Princess Catherine in marriage, and, the dauphin being disinherited, to succeed to the crown of France on her father's death. He was also to be regent during King Charles's life; and all who held honours or offices of any kind in France were at once to swear allegiance to him as their future sovereign. Henry, for his part, was to use his utmost power to reduce to obedience those towns and places within the realm which adhered to the dauphin or the Armagnacs.

6. A treaty on this basis was at length concluded at Troyes in Champagne on May 21, 1420, and on Trinity Sunday, June 2, Henry was married to the Princess Catherine. Shortly afterwards, the treaty was formally registered by the states of the realm at Paris, when the dauphin was condemned and attainted as guilty of the murder of the Duke of Burgundy and declared in-

A.D. 1420. May 21. Treaty of Troyes Henry's marriage.

capable of succeeding to the crown. But the state of affairs left Henry no time for honeymoon festivities. On the Tuesday after his wedding he again put himself at the head of his army, and marched with Philip of Burgundy to lay siege to Sens, which in a few days capitulated. Montereau and Melun were next besieged in succession, and each, after some resistance, was compelled to surrender. The latter siege lasted nearly four months, and during its continuance Henry fought a single combat with the governor in the mines, each combatant having his vizor down and being unknown to the other. The governor's name was Barbason, and he was one of those accused of complicity in the murder of the Duke of Orleans; but in consequence of this incident, Henry saved him from the capital punishment which he would otherwise have incurred on his capture.

V. *Henry's Third Invasion of France—His Death.*

1. Towards the end of the year Henry entered Paris in triumph with the French king and the Duke of Burgundy. He there kept Christmas, and shortly afterwards removed with his Queen into Normandy on his return into England. He held a parliament at Rouen to confirm his authority in the duchy, after which he passed through Picardy and Calais, and crossing the sea came by Dover and Canterbury to London. By his own subjects, and especially in the capital, he and his bride were received with profuse demonstrations of joy. The Queen was crowned at Westminster with great magnificence, and afterwards Henry went a progress with her through the country, making pilgrimages to several of the more famous shrines in England.

A.D. 1421.

The Queen crowned, Feb. 24.

2. But while he was thus employed, a great calamity

befell the English power in France, which, when the news arrived in England, made it apparent that the King's presence was again much needed across the Channel. His brother, the Duke of Clarence, whom he had left as his lieutenant, was defeated and slain at Beaugé in Anjou by an army of French and Scots, a number of English noblemen being also slain or taken prisoners. This was the first important advantage the dauphin had gained, and the credit of the victory was mainly due to his Scotch allies. For the Duke of Albany, who was Regent of Scotland, though it is commonly supposed that he was unwilling to give needless offence to England lest Henry should terminate his power by setting the Scotch king at liberty, had been compelled by the general sympathy of the Scots with France to send a force under his son the Earl of Buchan to serve against the English. The service which they did in that battle was so great that the Earl of Buchan was created by the dauphin Constable of France.

Battle of Beaugé, March 22.

3. Again Henry crossed the sea with a new army, having borrowed large sums for the expenses of the expedition. Before he left England he made a private treaty with his prisoner King James of Scotland, promising to let him return to his country after the campaign in France on certain specified conditions, among which it was agreed that he should take the command of a body of troops in aid of the English. James had accompanied him in his last campaign, and Henry had endeavoured to make use of his authority to forbid the Scots in France from taking part in the war, but they had refused to acknowledge themselves bound to a king who was a captive. By this agreement, however, Henry obtained real assistance and co-operation from his prisoner, whom he employed, in concert with the Duke of Gloucester, in the siege of

Henry's third invasion of France.

Dreux, which very soon surrendered. He himself meanwhile marched towards the Loire to meet the dauphin, and took Beaugency; then returning northwards, first reduced Villeneuve on the Yonne, and afterwards laid siege to Meaux on the Marne. The latter place held out for seven months, and while Henry lay before it, he received intelligence that his queen had borne him a son at Windsor, who was christened Henry.

Birth of Henry VI., Dec. 6.

4. The city of Meaux surrendered on May 10, 1422. The governor, a man who had been guilty of great cruelties, was beheaded, and his head and body were suspended from a tree, on which he himself had caused a number of people to be hanged as adherents of the Duke of Burgundy. Henry was now master of the greater part of the north of France, and his queen came over from England to join him, with reinforcements under his brother the Duke of Bedford. But he was not permitted to rest; for the dauphin, having taken from his ally the Duke of Burgundy the town of La Charité on the Loire, proceeded to lay siege to Côsne, and Philip, having applied to Henry for assistance, he sent forward the Duke of Bedford with his army, intending shortly to follow himself. This demonstration was sufficient. The dauphin felt that he was too weak to contend with the united English and Burgundian forces, and he withdrew from the siege.

A.D. 1422. May 10.

5. Henry, however, was disabled from joining the army by a severe attack of dysentery; and though he had at first hoped that he might be carried in a litter to head-quarters, he soon found that the illness was far too serious to permit him to carry out his intention. He was accordingly conveyed back to Vincennes near Paris, where he grew so rapidly worse that it was evident his end was near. In a few

Illness and death of Henry V.

brief words to those about him he declared his will touching the government of England and France after his death until his infant son should be of age. The regency of France he committed to the Duke of Bedford, in case it should be declined by the Duke of Burgundy. That of England he gave to his other brother, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. To his two uncles, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, he entrusted the guardianship of his child. He besought all parties to maintain the alliance with Burgundy, and never to release the Duke of Orleans and the other prisoners of Agincourt during his son's minority.

Aug. 31. Having given these instructions he expired, on the last day of August, 1422.

6. His death was bewailed both in England and France with no ordinary regret. The great achievements of his reign made him naturally a popular hero; nor was the regard felt for his memory diminished when under the feeble reign of his son all that he had gained was irrecoverably lost again, so that nothing remained of all his conquests except the story of how they had been won. Those past glories, indeed, must have seemed all the brighter when contrasted with a present which knew but disaster abroad and civil dissension at home. The early death of Henry also contributed to the popular estimate of his greatness. It was seen that in a very few years he had subdued a large part of the territory of France. It was not seen that in the nature of things this advantage could not be maintained, and that even the greatest military talents would not have succeeded in preserving the English conquests.

7. Nor can it be said that Henry's success, extraordinary as it was, was altogether owing to his own abilities. That he exhibited great qualities as a general cannot be denied; but these would have availed him little if the

rival factions in France had not been far more bitterly opposed to each other than to him. Indeed, it is difficult after all to justify, even as a matter of policy, his interference in French affairs except as a means of diverting public attention from the fact that he inherited from his father but an indifferent title even to the throne of England. And though success attended his efforts beyond all expectation, he most wilfully endangered the safety, not only of himself, but of his gallant army, when he determined to march with reduced forces through the enemy's country from Harfleur to Calais. It was a rashness nothing less than culpable, but that in his own interest rashness was good policy. Unless he could succeed in desperate enterprises against tremendous odds and so make himself a military hero and a favourite of the multitude, his throne was insecure. He succeeded; but it was only by staking everything upon the venture—his own safety and that of his whole army, which if the French had exercised but a little more discretion, would inevitably have been cut to pieces or made prisoners to a man.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE AND THE WAR IN BOHEMIA.

1. IN speaking of the visit of the Emperor Sigismund to England, we have already made allusion to the famous Council of Constance, which commenced its sittings in the year 1415. But it is right that we should here give some account of what led to the meeting of that council, and also of what it did, and of the events to which its proceedings gave rise.

2. It has been observed in a former chapter that on

the election of Urban VI. at Rome in 1378, a portion of the cardinals set up a rival pope named Clement VII. who brought back the see to Avignon and was recognised by France and some other countries. This Antipope Clement died in 1394; but the party which had adhered to him elected as his successor a native of Arragon, who assumed the name of Benedict XIII. Meanwhile the other party, which had adhered to Urban, elected a new pope on his death, and afterwards two more in succession, the last of whom was named Gregory XII. But efforts were now made on both sides to terminate the evils of this long continued schism. Benedict XIII. at Avignon and Gregory XII. at Rome, were each elected under a promise to resign if his rival would do the same, in order that a new pope might be chosen who should be acknowledged by both parties. But neither Gregory nor Benedict showed any willingness to give up his title for the good of Christendom, and, a council being held at Pisa in 1409, they were both deposed, and a new pope, Alexander V., elected in their place. The decision of the council, however, did not very much mend matters, for neither of the deposed popes would acknowledge its authority, and the result was to make three rival pontiffs instead of two. The validity of the act of deposition, however, was generally acknowledged, and when Alexander V. died the year after his election, he was succeeded by Cardinal Cossa, who called himself John XXIII.

The schism in the papacy.

Council of Pisa.

A.D. 1410.

3. Now it must be mentioned that this schism in the papacy was also the cause of a succession of rival claimants to the throne of Naples; for the kings of Naples held their kingdom of the Pope as their superior lord, and when Queen Joanna, who then ruled, adhered to the Avignon pope, Clement VII., she

Rival kings of Naples.

was deposed by a bull of the Roman pope, Urban VI. who called in Charles of Durazzo to give effect to his sentence. This Charles soon took possession of the kingdom and put Joanna to death ; but A.D. 1382. Louis Duke of Anjou, whom she had named as her successor, was crowned at Avignon by Clement VII. and went to Italy to dispute his title. Within a very few years both the rivals died, leaving their pretensions to their sons, who with very varying fortune, each at times gaining great successes against the other, kept up the struggle for nearly thirty years. In 1399, the year when Henry IV. obtained the throne of England, Ladislaus, the king who adhered to the Roman pope, made himself for the time completely master of the kingdom, of which he kept undisturbed possession for ten years. During this interval he was also invited to become King of Hungary, and crowned in opposition to King Sigismund, who was afterwards emperor. But in 1409 his rival, Louis of Anjou, having been recalled by the Neapolitans, obtained a recognition of his title from the Council of Pisa and the new pope Alexander V. Two years later a battle took place between the two rivals, in which Ladislaus was utterly defeated, to the great delight of John XXIII., Alexander's successor, who denounced him as a heretic and published a crusade against him. Ladislaus was shortly afterwards driven to make his peace with Pope John ; but in 1413 he suddenly gained possession of Rome, and was meditating an attack on Bologna, whither John had retired, when he was arrested by mortal illness.

4. It was no great wonder that Ladislaus showed very little respect for the authority of Pope John. That pontiff had been elected at Bologna, where his predecessor died, by the influence of Louis of Anjou, the French king of Naples, who had at the time Pope John XXIII.

a fleet off Genoa intended to act against Ladislaus. Pope John was a Neapolitan by birth, and in his youth, though he had already entered the Church, he had served at sea in the war between Louis and Ladislaus. Afterwards he had gone to Rome, where being made chamberlain to Pope Boniface IX., he had driven a trade in simony and the sale of indulgences. His morals were a matter of public scandal, and his election was a shock to all good men. But he was a man of great ability and a consummate politician. Of course when he was made pope he took the part of Louis against Ladislaus; but when Ladislaus took possession of Rome and drove him to Bologna, he suggested to Sigismund, who was now become emperor, the convocation of a general council to promote the peace of Europe by restoring unity to the Church. Sigismund acquiesced in the proposal and appointed that the council should meet at Constance. By this time Pope John repented of the advice that he had given, as the death of Ladislaus left him free to go back to Rome; but the matter was now settled.

5. Besides the rival claims of three different popes, the council had to take into consideration the subject of heresy; for the doctrines of Wycliffe had spread beyond England and were very popular in Bohemia.

John Huss.

John Huss, the confessor of Sophia, Queen of Bohemia, was deeply imbued with them, and had translated several of Wycliffe's works into the Bohemian language. So great was the influence he had obtained that he was made rector of the university of Prague, and though excommunicated by the Archbishop of Prague, he gathered by his preaching a considerable party, till disturbances took place in public between his followers and the supporters of papal authority. These evils were aggravated by the publication of a bull of Pope John for a crusade against King Ladislaus—a project which Huss

strongly denounced both by word and writing. People in the streets of Prague cried out that Pope John was Antichrist. Some of the ringleaders were captured by the authorities and put to death in prison. But their partisans obtained possession of their bodies and carried them to the different churches wrapped in cloth of gold, where the priests exhibited them to the assembled worshippers as saints and martyrs for the truth.

6. The Council at Constance was opened on Friday, November 16, 1414, Pope John himself presiding. The Emperor Sigismund arrived at Christmas. At the first session some one accused the Pope of a long catalogue of crimes, some of which were regarded as too scandalous to be divulged. He was struck with consternation at the indictment, and took counsel with a few confidential friends what to do. He confessed to them that some of the charges were true, but was disposed to take comfort in the thought that a pope could not be deposed except for heresy. He was, however, advised by his friends to resign, and this he promised to do on March 2, at the second session of the council. Shortly afterwards he escaped from the city in disguise, and resuming his authority, ordered the council to dissolve. But the council came to a determination that their authority as a general council was superior to that of the Pope himself, and that instead of their obeying the Pope, he was bound to obey them. Pope John was accordingly sent for and brought back to Constance; the charges against him were examined, and on May 29 he was deposed and thrown into prison.

The Council of Constance.

A.D. 1415. March 2.

7. After this Gregory XII. submitted to the authority of the council, and his resignation of the papacy was received on July 4. Benedict XIII., the one remaining claimant of pontifical honours, was in Spain, and some

negotiation was required to induce him to resign as well. But the Emperor left the Council and went to Narbonne, where he had a meeting with the King of Arragon, who with the Kings of Castile, Navarre, and other countries which had hitherto supported Benedict, engaged by their ambassadors to withdraw their obedience from him; after which he was deposed by the council on March 30, 1417. Thus, a way being opened for the election of a new pope with a valid title, a conclave was held at Constance, in which Martin V. was chosen as head of the Church.

A.D. 1417. Nov. 11.

8. John Huss had received a summons to appear before the council. He obtained a safe-conduct from the Emperor Sigismund, and arrived at Constance with a large suite of followers on November 3, 1414. On his way thither he had posted up placards in the different towns, offering to dispute with any anyone on matters of theology. He had challenged the Archbishop of Prague in this manner to a disputation before he left Bohemia. But he found Constance a very different place from his own city, and soon had cause to doubt about the treatment he should receive there notwithstanding his safe-conduct. He attempted to escape, but was brought back and committed to prison. Efforts were made to get him to retract his heresies, but in vain. The Council passed sentence upon him, ordered his books to be burned, and himself to be degraded from the priesthood. Being then as a layman delivered over to the secular arm, he was, by the authorities of Constance, condemned to be burned at the stake,—a fate which he endured with great firmness and heroism. His ashes were then thrown into the Rhine, from a fear lest his disciples should preserve them as relics.

Martyrdom of Huss. A.D. 1415. July 6.

9. The infliction of capital punishment, after he had received the Emperor's safe-conduct, was a thing which,

apart from the cruelty of the sentence, seemed inconsistent with good faith and honour. But in the eyes of the council heresy was a noxious disease which must be suppressed at any cost for the good of the whole Christian world; and the Emperor's safe-conduct, it was considered, was only intended to assure his safety in coming up to Constance and pleading his own cause before the council. It gave him an opportunity of vindicating his doctrine by argument, if it could be vindicated to the council's satisfaction; but it was no more intended to protect an obstinate heretic than if he had been a murderer. As John Huss had failed to justify his doctrines to the satisfaction of the council, and refused to abandon them at their bidding, his safe-conduct availed him no further.

10. The attention of the council was at the same time called to the doctrines of his master, Wycliffe, which were likewise condemned as heretical; and so anxious were the assembled fathers to give effect to their censure that they ordered Wycliffe's bones to be dug up and burned. This sentence was put in execution in England shortly afterwards, and the Reformer's ashes were thrown into a rivulet which flows by the town of Lutterworth.

11. Before the condemnation of Huss, his friend and most devoted follower, Jerome of Prague, was also cited before the council. He had already come to Constance, but finding that Huss had been thrown into prison he withdrew, and wrote to the Emperor from Uberlingen, desiring a safe-conduct to return. He also caused placards to be set upon the church doors at Constance, offering to come and clear himself from the imputation of heresy if no violence were offered him. It was in answer to this that the summons was sent out against him. Jerome, meanwhile, receiving no satisfactory assurances of safety, was making his way back to Bohemia, but he was arrested on the road and brought back to

Jerome of Prague.

Constance. After the sentence executed upon Huss he made a retractation, but, doubts being entertained as to the sincerity of his conversion, he was subjected to further examination, and confessed that he had only been driven to recant by fear. He denounced his own cowardice, recalled what he had said, and expressed his full adhesion to the doctrines of Wycliffe and Huss. Sentence of condemnation was accordingly passed against him as a relapsed heretic, and on May 30, 1416, he suffered the same fate that Huss had suffered nine months before. His fortitude at the last, like that of Huss, struck beholders with admiration. The learned Poggio Bracciolini, who, by his examination of convent libraries, recovered a number of the writings of the ancient classic authors which had been lost to the world for centuries, was present at his trial and execution. The learning and eloquence of Jerome won his highest admiration, and his constancy at the stake he could not help comparing with that of Socrates when he drank the cup of hemlock.

12. The executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague were intended to promote peace and religious union throughout Christendom. They brought anything but peace, however, to Bohemia, the country to which the two martyrs belonged. No sooner was the execution of Huss known at Prague than a great sedition arose. His followers attacked the palace of the archbishop and the houses of the orthodox clergy. The Bohemian nobles wrote an indignant letter to the council, whom they accused of putting to death as a heretic a man who had not been convicted of any error, and they declared their intention of appealing from the council to the future pope against his condemnation. But stronger measures were taken by John Ziska of Troczkow, chamberlain of Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, the deposed emperor. This Ziska

Troubles in Bohemia.

Ziska, leader of the Bohemians.

was a man of considerable experience in war, who had lost an eye in battle. In 1410 he had lent his services to Jagellon, King of Poland, and distinguished himself at the great battle of Tannenberg against the Teutonic knights. He was a personal friend of Huss, and resented his persecution besides as an affront to the people of Bohemia. The same feeling was largely shared by the peasantry, who assembled in great numbers to revenge the martyr's death, and chose Ziska for their leader.

13. The death of Jerome, added to that of Huss, increased their indignation. Great disturbances took place, which King Wenceslaus, who partly sympathised with the Hussites, was unable to appease. He conceded to them the use of a number of churches in which they might administer the sacrament to the people in both kinds; but while the Catholic party did all in their power to resist this innovation, the Hussites only increased their demands. Wenceslaus in vain endeavoured to temporise. The government of Prague was in the hands of the Catholics, but on July 30, 1419, a collision took place between the two parties in the streets; on which the Hussites, under Ziska, attacked the town hall, and having forced an entrance, threw the magistrates out of the windows. The mob below received them on the points of lances.

14. King Wenceslaus was much agitated on receiving the news of this outrage, and died a few days after. His brother, the Emperor Sigismund, succeeded him as King of Bohemia. But the Hussites, remembering the persecution of their leader, refused to acknowledge his title, and Ziska overthrew his troops in numerous engagements, although the Pope, to assist the Emperor, proclaimed a crusade against the heretics. In the course of these wars Ziska lost his other eye; but he still continued to

lead the insurgents with vigour, and soon succeeded in driving the Emperor out of Bohemia.

15. Such was the state of matters in that kingdom at the time when Henry V. of England died. Sigismund had for the time lost possession of his kingdom, and armies were being raised by the German electors to assist him to recover it. But these armies, too, were defeated by the victorious Ziska, who maintained the cause of the Hussites successfully till his death in 1424; and even for several years after that they were victorious under other leaders. Divisions, however, sprang up among themselves which were far more disastrous to their cause than all the armies sent against them. The first insurgents under Ziska encamped upon a hill, named by them Mount Tabor, about fifty miles south of Prague. This hill was all but completely surrounded by the river Luschnitz, a tributary of the Moldau, so that it could not be approached except upon one side without crossing the stream. Taking advantage of this position Ziska converted his camp into a fortified town, and his followers obtained the name of Taborites. Other sections of the party were called Horebites, Orphanites, and Calixtines. There was also a very repulsive set of fanatics called the Adamites, who went about naked after the manner of our first parents. This latter sect Ziska had made war upon, nor do they appear to have been at any time part of the Hussite party; but their mere existence serves to mark how greatly the people of Bohemia were at this time influenced by religious ideas of the most extravagant description. So little had the council of Constance done to put an end to heresy!

16. The Council of Basle which met in 1431 adopted a different line of policy. As the burning of heretics, instead of confuting their arguments, had not restored peace to the Church, this council used

The Council of Basle.

every means in its power to assure the Hussites that they might come and discuss their doctrines before them in perfect freedom and security. Won by this invitation, Procopius, surnamed the Shaven, general of the Taborites, came to Basle with a number of his followers. The matters in controversy between them and the Church were discussed at length; and some concessions were made by the council, especially permitting the laity to partake of the communion in both kinds. On this a large number of the Hussites became reconciled to the Church. The remainder still held out; but their strength was broken, and after some defeats they agreed to recognise Sigismund as their king, so that in the year 1436 he entered Prague triumphantly. Still disaffection was not at an end, and long after the death of Sigismund religious factions continued to agitate Bohemia. Even two centuries later the Bohemians rose in arms and commenced a long and bloody war to vindicate anew those principles for which the Hussites had contended.

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY VI.

I. *The King's Minority and the French War.*

1. THE death of Henry V. was an event which the English could not help feeling as a calamity of no ordinary kind. No other of their kings had ever been so lamented. In his brief reign of nine years and a half he had done more than Edward III. and the Black Prince had succeeded in effecting. He had virtually added another kingdom to his inheritance—a kingdom larger, richer, and with a finer climate than his own. He had compelled the King of France to disinherit his own son

and to adopt him as his heir, with the concurrence of the estates of the realm. Yet he was called away before he could secure these advantages on a satisfactory basis, and he was obliged to leave to others the task of vindicating for his son against the dauphin the rights that had been conceded to him by the treaty of Troyes.

2. It was a task that occupied the attention and fully engaged the energies of all England for a long time after. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of the next twenty years than the almost total absence of domestic events of any interest. The whole mind of the nation was absorbed with the war in France, and even the arrangements for the government at home were at first of subordinate importance. The crown of England was no longer a question in dispute. Though the son of Henry was an infant of only nine months old, the claims of the Earl of March were not for a moment thought of. Every Englishman desired that infant peacefully to succeed his father. The title to the crown of France was the only thing in question, and to maintain that every nerve was strained: on France all eyes were riveted.

England wholly occupied with the French war.

3. One domestic question, however, had to be settled at the outset. According to the constitution of England all acts of government emanate from the king; but when the king, either from being under age or from some other disqualification, is unable to act himself, his authority devolves upon the great council of the lords, who, if he were capable of acting, would be his natural advisers. This authority the lords on the present occasion were solicited to yield up to Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, who claimed the regency under the will of the late King his brother. But the council withstood his claim, and when Parliament assembled the House of Lords determined

The council will not allow a regency in England.

that the late King's will on this point was invalid, not being warranted by precedent or constitutional usage. The Duke of Gloucester was empowered to act, but only with the consent of the council, as the young King's representative in summoning and dissolving Parliament. He was admitted to be the King's chief councillor in the absence of his brother Bedford; and an act was passed committing to him in Bedford's absence the care of defending the kingdom, with the title of Protector. But his functions in this respect were very limited, and the real work of government was entrusted to a committee of lords and commoners.

4. As for France, King Charles, according to Henry's dying request, first offered the regency to the Duke of Burgundy, and on his refusal gave it to Bedford. He was at first to govern in the name of Charles; but within two months after the death of Henry, the unhappy King of France also died. The infant who had already succeeded to the throne of England by the name of Henry VI. was now, by the treaty of Troyes, King of France as well, and had in his uncle Bedford the ablest administrator that could have been found to advance his interests there. The dauphin, however, on his father's death, of course claimed to succeed him. The English laughed at his pretensions, and called him in mockery the King of Bourges; but he was acknowledged south of the Loire to the borders of Guienne, and he had no lack of good soldiers, both of his own country and of the Scots, to assist him in recovering his inheritance.

The Duke of Bedford Regent in France.

Oct. 21.

5. In accordance with the advice of Henry V. to preserve at all hazards the friendship of the Duke of Burgundy, Bedford began by marrying that duke's sister. He also promoted another marriage by which the duchy of Brittany was for a time won over to the league against

Charles VII., and nearly the whole sea coast of France was placed practically in the power of the English. These marriages took place amid the stir and bustle of war, and small time was wasted by the duke in wedding festivities. The enemy had surprised various places in Champagne and even in Normandy. But Bedford sent an army into Burgundy under the Earl of Salisbury, who after an obstinate battle raised the siege of Crevant on the Yonne.

Progress of the English arms.

For some years afterwards the war went on very favourably to England. The great victory of Verneuil in 1424 opened to the English the way into the province of Maine, which they reduced with ease. The affairs of Charles were in a desperate condition, and would probably have been still more so but for dissensions which sprang up among the English at home between the Duke of Gloucester and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, the Lord Chancellor, of which we shall give an account hereafter.

6. To put an end to the interference of Scotland in the war with France, the English council determined in

Liberation of James I.

1423 to fulfil the promise made by Henry V. to liberate King James and restore him to his country. Accordingly, after an unjust confinement of more than eighteen years, the ambitious Duke of Albany being now dead, James was set at liberty for a ransom of 40,000 pounds, on swearing to a treaty by which the kings of England and Scotland were forbidden to assist each other's enemies. To engage James still further to the English interest he was given in marriage Lady Jane Beaufort, sister of the Duke of Somerset, a lady for whom he had conceived a great affection, and the sum of 10,000 marks was deducted from his ransom for her dower.

II. *The Siege of Orleans. Joan of Arc.*

1. By the ability and vigour of the Duke of Bedford's administration the English not only succeeded in maintaining their conquests for several years, but even gained ground upon their enemies. For a time they made themselves undisputed masters of nearly the whole territory north of the Loire; and in the summer of 1428 it was determined to make one great effort to drive the forces of Charles south of that river. Accordingly, reinforcements having arrived from England under the Earl of Salisbury, an advance was made upon Orleans. After taking several places round about, the English laid siege to the city in October. The undertaking was a great one. Salisbury caused sixty forts to be built about the city, to prevent succours being sent in; and on six of the largest he planted batteries which opened fire upon the walls. In course of time the English gained possession of a tower which commanded the city. From a window in this tower Salisbury one day took a survey of the fortifications, when a shot from the besieged shattered the iron casement, so that the earl was mortally wounded by the fragments. His command was immediately taken by the Earl of Suffolk.

Siege of Orleans.

2. The siege continued for several months, and in the spring of the following year gave rise to a remarkable action called the Battle of Herrings. At the beginning of Lent Sir John Fastolf, a brave warrior who, having distinguished himself at Agincourt and elsewhere, had been entrusted with the government of Normandy, and afterwards with that of Anjou and Maine, was commissioned by the Regent to conduct a convoy of provisions, chiefly consisting of salt fish, to Orleans for the use of the besiegers. The French, having ascertained that such a convoy was to be sent,

A.D. 1429. Battle of Herrings.

determined to intercept it upon the road. Fastolf had an escort of 1,700 men, but the enemy came upon him in superior numbers. He, however, entrenched his men behind the waggons containing the provisions, and they not only sustained the attack without flinching, but fought so bravely that they threw their assailants into confusion. As soon as it appeared that they began to give way Fastolf ordered the barricade to be removed, and the enemy were pursued with very great slaughter. Among the slain were six-and-twenty officers of distinction.

Feb. 12.

3. The fall of Orleans seemed now inevitable. The policy of undertaking the siege of such a city had been doubted by Bedford in the first instance. The effort had certainly taxed the resources of England to the utmost; but apparently it was about to be crowned with success. Charles expected to be driven entirely from the central parts of France, and talked of retiring into Dauphiné. A proposal was made by the French to put Orleans in the hands of the Duke of Burgundy. It was scouted by the Regent Bedford in terms which perhaps increased the coolness of his ally. He was not the man, he said, to beat the bush that others might catch the birds. The besieged were reduced to almost utter despair, when one of the most marvellous occurrences in history put an end to their suspense.

4. In the month of February 1429—about the very time that Sir John Fastolf disconcerted the attempt of the French to surprise his convoy of herrings—a young woman in a remote province of France presented herself before the commanding officer of the district, declaring that she had a divine commission to succour Orleans and to conduct King Charles to Rheims, to be crowned after the manner of his ancestors. The name of this enthusiast was Jeanne d'Arc, or as some French anti-

quaries prefer to write it, Darc; but for ages the French themselves have spelt it with an apostrophe, and in English we have been accustomed to call her Joan of Arc. She was a native of the village of Domremy, on the Meuse, in the duchy of Bar, on the borders of Lorraine. She was of poor but pious parents. Even from her girlish years she had seen visions and heard voices from Heaven, and so persuaded was she of her divine mission that she had kept herself unmarried against the wish of her father. The officer to whom she made known her intentions naturally thought her at first a person of deranged intellect; but on further consideration he determined to comply with her request and send her to King Charles, who was then at Chinon in Touraine. Dressed and armed like a man, she set out in the company of two neighbours, a herald, an archer, and two pages, on a journey of almost two hundred and fifty miles, through a country intersected by numerous rivers and mostly in the possession of the English. On March 5 she arrived at Chinon, after eleven days' travelling.

Joan of Arc.

5. On her coming to the King it is related that she gave evidence, in more ways than one, of the possession of supernatural gifts. It is said that she identified Charles in a dress like that of his courtiers, and revealed to him a secret known only to himself. She also demanded and had given to her a sword, from a church in Touraine; which sword, according to the most marvellous reports, she described minutely before seeing it, although it was buried in the ground beneath the altar. Whatever may have been the facts, she succeeded in persuading people that she had been sent either by God or by the Devil. Belief in all sorts of occult influences was in this age particularly strong, and Charles commissioned a number of divines to inquire as to the source of her inspiration. The purity of her

Marvellous stories about her.

patriotism—the genuineness of her religious feeling—were such as to make a sinister interpretation impossible, and the divines reported that she had clearly a call from Heaven. She was accordingly furnished with a charger, a suit of armour, and a banner after her own direction; and with a squire and three other attendants she set forth upon her mission. She sent a formal summons to the Duke of Bedford to raise the siege as he would avoid the wrath of God. This the English treated with the contempt which might have been expected. But the Maid came to Blois where a force had assembled to make a great effort for the relief of Orleans. She was allowed to take the command of this detachment, and she gave stringent orders to free the camp of all loose characters, and ordered every soldier to be confessed. She then, by a rapid march, arrived in two days before Orleans. After the first night's camping out she took the sacrament in presence of the troops. A multitude of dissolute soldiers, suddenly animated by a new spirit, bent their knees before their priests and did the same. The whole army was raised out of despondency to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and rumours of the holiness and of the miracles of the Maid were repeated even in the English camp.

6. Even where her over-confidence might have been disastrous it had the effect of increasing her repute. She had proposed to come upon Orleans by the right bank of the Loire through the thick of the English army. In this she was overruled by the generals, who took her the other way. But when she saw the river between her and the city, she insisted that the troops should return to Blois and go against Orleans by the north side. To satisfy her the main body of the army was dismissed, but she herself was persuaded to embark a few miles up the stream to conduct a convoy of provisions into the city. The wind

and tide were contrary when she yielded to the entreaties of the marshals. But the wind changed, so that vessels came up from Orleans, and she embarked. At nightfall she entered the city, bringing victuals and stores for the garrison. She was received as if she had been an angel from heaven, and rode through the streets on a white charger, amid the acclamations of the people.

7. After this she directed operations against some of the forts surrounding the city, and obtained possession of four successively after inflicting great losses on the besiegers. The English had lost all spirit for the fight. They were persuaded a power now fought against them that was more than human. Already the siege had lasted seven months, and it was difficult to maintain the strain much longer. The besieging army withdrew on May 12, pursued by the French in its retreat. Misfortunes began to overtake the English arms on all sides. The Earl of Suffolk was made prisoner at the capture of Jargeau. The brave Lord Talbot was made prisoner at the battle of Patay. The Regent Bedford was forced to return once more to Paris, and wrote home to the government in England that the tide of success had been turned by 'a limb of the Fiend,' called by the enemy the Pucelle. Such were the terms in which even he did not disdain to speak of the heroic Maid!

8. She now persuaded Charles to march to Rheims that he might be crowned. He set out at the head of 10,000 men, summoning the towns to surrender as he went along. After a short resistance Troyes capitulated, and Chalons followed its example. The citizens of Rheims then drove out the English garrison, and presented the keys to Charles, who entered the city in triumph. The coronation took place the day after.

Charles crowned at Rheims, July 17.

9. The Maid had accomplished her mission, and

would now have withdrawn once more into private life; but the King persuaded her to remain in his service, and expressed his gratitude for what she had done by granting her native village of Domremy a perpetual exemption from tributes. The effect of the coronation was seen immediately afterwards in the surrender of a large number of other towns to Charles, while Bedford felt himself so weak that he did not dare hazard a blow in their defence. He sent pressing messages to England for reinforcements, and urged that, to counterbalance the coronation of Charles, the boy King Henry should also be crowned king of France. The English council agreed with this advice, but thought it desirable that he should first be crowned in England. That ceremony was accordingly performed on November 6 at Westminster; and as it implied that Henry, though only eight years old, entered then on the actual functions of royalty, the Parliament decreed a few days later that the title of Protector given to the Duke of Bedford and to Humphrey Duke of Gloucester should from that time cease.

Henry crowned in England, Nov. 6,

10. Two whole years elapsed after the coronation at Westminster before Henry could be crowned in France. He went thither in 1430, accompanied by Cardinal Beaufort, leaving the Duke of Gloucester in England as guardian of the realm. He seems to have stayed at Rouen the whole of that year and the next, and only towards the close of the year 1431 he went to Paris, where he was crowned on December 16. Bedford would fain have carried him through the country to Rheims and had the ceremony performed there; but it was found impossible to make the attempt with safety. The journey, even to the capital, was not wholly free from danger; for Charles had already approached dangerously near to Paris, while

A.D. 1430, and in France. A.D. 1431, Dec. 16.

the Regent was in Normandy. The latter was also conscious that he could not greatly rely on the constancy of the Duke of Burgundy, to whom he gave up the provinces of Champagne and La Brie[1] in order to secure his friendship.

11. But in the meantime an event had occurred which revived considerably the spirits of the English. The Duke of Burgundy, gratified by the cession of Champagne, laid siege to Compiegne. The Pucelle, hearing of the attempt, threw herself into the town, not altogether, as it is supposed, to the satisfaction of the governor, who did not desire to share with a woman the glory of defending it. On May 25, 1431, she made a sortie, but was obliged to retire. Her retreat, however, was cut off, orders having been given either by mistake or malice, to shut the gates of the town and to raise the drawbridge. Under these circumstances she was compelled to yield herself a prisoner to the officers of the Duke of Burgundy. The English were delighted beyond measure at the incident, and the Regent Bedford lost no time in obtaining from the Burgundian general her delivery into his own hands. The English government then instituted a process against her for witchcraft before ecclesiastical judges, by whom she was found guilty; but on recanting her pretensions of a divine mission her life was spared, and she was condemned to be imprisoned for life and fed on bread and water. This humiliation might have been sufficient to satisfy the vengeance of her enemies; but further punishment was in store for her. In her recantation she abjured from

A.D. 1431. May 25.

Capture of Joan of Arc.

[1] La Brie was a district to the west of Champagne proper, nearly corresponding with the modern department of Seine and Marne.

thenceforth the wearing of male attire; but after her return to prison her own armour was left in her way, and she could not resist the temptation to put it on. The act was observed by spies, a new information was laid against her, and it was at once determined to carry out the capital sentence already passed upon her, as upon a relapsed heretic. She was burned to death in the market-place at Rouen, on May 30, 1431.

She is burned as a heretic.

12. The cruelty and vindictiveness of this wicked act did not help to retrieve the fortunes of the English in France. Superstitious fear seems to have largely influenced her persecutors, but they were not relieved from it by her death. The Church had pronounced sentence upon her, most of the judges were her own countrymen, and even Charles did not make an effort to save her; but the English themselves could not feel satisfied that all was fair. The majority might still talk of her as a witch and a sorceress, but those who had witnessed her deeds and sufferings were not without a sense that an innocent woman had been slain and that God would take vengeance on the act. The war went on languidly. The French obtained possession of Chartres, and the lukewarmness of Burgundy as an ally was more manifest every day. At home, people were becoming weary of the cost of the protracted struggle. Efforts were made by the Pope to negotiate a peace, which came to nothing, as the English refused to acknowledge Charles as King of France. But Bedford himself was well aware that his power of maintaining the struggle was no longer what it had been.

III. *Gloucester and Beaufort. Negotiations for Peace.*

1. In England, from the very beginning of Henry's reign, there had been a struggle for power between Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of

Winchester, afterwards Cardinal. The former was the brother, the latter the uncle, of the late King Henry V. We have already mentioned that the council from the first disallowed the claim of Gloucester to be regent under his brother's will, and appointed him merely Protector. But the duke was dissatisfied with his limited powers, and showed a great inclination to presume upon his position as the King's leading councillor. Beaufort took the lead in opposing these pretensions, and his opposition to the duke led to a number of unseemly quarrels, in which the bishop had certainly the advantage in point of wisdom, while his rival endangered the affairs of the whole kingdom by his extraordinary indiscretion. At one time his conduct, besides being scandalous in point of morality, very nearly alienated the Duke of Burgundy from the English alliance. He enjoyed, however, considerable popularity, and was called 'the good Duke Humphrey,' while the manifest ambition of Beaufort, and the fact of his being a churchman, prevented him from gaining the entire goodwill of the nation.

Rivalry of the Duke of Gloucester and Beaufort Bishop of Winchester.

2. In 1427 Beaufort received from the Pope the dignity of cardinal, and was shortly after appointed papal legate in England. This at once created a new subject of dispute. A cardinal was a servant of the Church, not of the State. He was a vassal of the Pope, not a minister of England; and the question was raised whether by the mere acceptance of such a position Beaufort had any longer a right to sit in the King's council or to enjoy the revenues of the bishopric of Winchester. Gloucester strongly urged his exclusion, and for some time the council entertained so much doubt upon the question that they refused to come to a decision, and desired the cardinal to abstain from attending the chapters of the Garter till the King should come of age.

Beaufort made a cardinal.

3 The cardinal, however, soon made it evident that his promotion in the Church did not by any means make him less zealous for the interests of his country. It was Rome he intended to betray, not England. His dignity had been conferred on him that he might make war on heretics, and the Pope had issued a bull for a crusade against the Hussites in Bohemia. Beaufort petitioned the King's council for leave to publish it in England, and to collect subscriptions and raise men for the enterprise. This was granted, but the number of men was reduced to half of the demand on the ground that men were so much needed for the defence of the kingdom. Still, it was the Church's cause. Englishmen were invited by the cardinal to enlist for the benefit of their souls. A force was conveyed across the sea; but before it left England, it was arranged between the council and the cardinal that it should be detained in France and employed against the enemies of England. Joan of Arc had already raised the siege of Orleans, and was conveying Charles to be crowned at Rheims. It was a great crisis, and Beaufort could excuse himself to the Pope by pretending that the expedition had been diverted from its professed object against his will.

The crusade against the Hussites.

4. By this discreditable juggle the cardinal had at least proved to the satisfaction of the council and the House of Lords that he preferred at heart the interests of his country to those of the Church. Notwithstanding that the fact was unprecedented of a cardinal taking part in the deliberations of the King's council, he was invited to resume his seat there on the understanding that he should absent himself whenever matters came to be discussed between England and the court of Rome. Both Houses of Parliament commended his loyalty, and it was evident that he had completely re-established his ascendancy. Duke Humphrey, on the other hand,

Beaufort's ascendancy.

was divested of his title of Protector at the coronation, and, though he never desisted, while he lived, from his efforts to supplant or injure his rival, those efforts were from this time utterly ineffectual.

5. These disputes at home affected seriously the interests of England in the war with France; and after the humiliation inflicted on the English arms by Joan of Arc, other causes contributed to render the struggle altogether a hopeless one for England. The Duke of Burgundy cooled in his friendship for his allies. The Duchess of Bedford, his sister, died. Conferences for peace took place at Arras, and after their failure the Duke of Burgundy made a separate treaty with France. The English wished for a termination of the war, but still looked upon the whole of France as theirs by right, and would only consent to allow Charles a portion of his own dominions as an appanage for which he was to do fealty. At length the Regent Bedford died, heart-broken at seeing his whole policy undermined. Owing to divided counsels, the English government delayed the appointment of his successor until the French had already retaken Paris; and though the man whom they at length appointed as regent proved himself both a statesman and a general of great ability, he was ill-supported at home, and after a very short time he was recalled.

Peace conferences, A.D. 1435.

A.D. 1435. Sept. 14.

A.D. 1436. April 13.

6. That man was Richard Duke of York, the son of that Earl of Cambridge who was put to death for conspiracy against Henry V. (See Chap. V. ii. 5, 6.) After his appointment he retook a number of towns and castles which had been lost, but he had not been a twelvemonth Regent when he was recalled, and his place was given to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who did nothing remarkable, and died

Richard Duke of York.

two years after his appointment. York was then made Regent a second time; but it was now utterly impossible for the English to do more than stand on the defensive. The loss of the Burgundian alliance made it difficult for them to hold their own in a hostile country, and endangered even Calais, which lay near Philip's Flemish territories. He had, in fact, already once laid siege to it, and was only driven away by an army sent over into Normandy under the Duke of Gloucester.

A.D. 1440.

7. Both countries had great cause to wish for peace. France was overrun by robber bands, popularly called *écorcheurs*, or flayers, who not only waylaid and plundered their victims, but stripped them of every vestige of clothing, leaving them nothing but their shirts. These freebooters attacked defenceless men of either party, and could not be controlled by either government. Nothing could exceed the misery of a country so long desolated by war and rapine.

Robber bands in France.

8. But the need of peace for England was even greater, and the English council, under the guidance of Cardinal Beaufort, thought that it might be promoted by the liberation of the Duke of Orleans, who had remained a prisoner in England ever since the days of Agincourt. This proposition was directly opposed to the advice given by Henry V. on his death-bed, and it met with the strongest opposition from the Duke of Gloucester; but the young King, who was now rapidly advancing to manhood, deferred much more to the advice of his grand-uncle the cardinal than to that of his uncle Gloucester. The Duke of Orleans engaged that if permitted to return to his country he would use his best efforts for peace. He took oath never to bear arms against England, and to pay a ransom of 60,000 crowns, which was to be remitted to him if his efforts for peace were successful; and he was allowed to go.

Liberation of the Duke of Orleans.

9. When the Duke of Orleans was about to take this oath, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, to show his displeasure, abruptly left the council and took his barge. His feelings were undoubtedly shared by a large part of the nation; but his influence was less than it had ever been, and next year he was made to undergo a great humiliation. His private life had been very discreditable. He had married in 1423 the heiress of the Count of Hainault, a lady who had a husband then alive, and who had only been able to obtain a divorce from him by applying to the Antipope Benedict. To vindicate his claim to her possessions he had invaded the Low Countries, and by so doing had almost provoked the Duke of Burgundy even then to renounce his alliance with England. Yet after all he got tired of her, and began to take pleasure in the society of another woman named Eleanor Cobham, whom he first made his mistress and afterwards his wife. At the period of which we are now speaking this woman was called Duchess of Gloucester.

10. Suddenly the Duchess Eleanor was accused of witchcraft and treason. Roger Bolingbroke, a chaplain of the duke her husband, was famous for his astronomical learning, and had been led by the study of occult science to practise the art of necromancy. He was arrested, and exhibited at St. Paul's some wax images and other apparatus with which he had practised divination; after which he was drawn, hanged, and quartered. But it was found that he and one Margery Jourdemain, commonly called the Witch of Eye, had been employed by the duchess to destroy the King's life by incantations. The process consisted in making an image of wax like the King which they by degrees consumed, with various spells, it being expected that the King's life would gradually waste away as the image was acted upon.

A.D. 1441. The Duchess of Gloucester accused of witchcraft.

11. It would seem that Dame Eleanor had been originally led to take counsel of these persons by her own anxiety to know her future destiny. If Henry happened to die unmarried or without an heir, her husband stood next in the succession, and the prospect of being one day queen inflamed her ambition. She inquired of the magician and of the witch how long Henry was likely to live; and from this it was but a short step to use the forbidden arts to hasten his end. Her ambition, however, was her ruin; and the discovery of her dealings with the sorcerers threw additional discredit on her whole past life. It was declared that she had originally employed love potions to secure the affections of the duke, and to draw him into his second, not very creditable marriage. Nevertheless, out of consideration for the duke, the punishment of her crime against the King was mitigated. Instead of being made to suffer as a traitor, she was compelled to do public penance for her breach of Christian morality. On three different days she walked through the streets of London with a taper in her hand; after which she was handed over to the custody of Sir Thomas Stanley, to be imprisoned for life. Her accomplice, the Witch of Eye, was apprehended at Westminster, and was burned to death at Smithfield the day after Bolingbroke's execution.

IV. *The King's Marriage. Deaths of Gloucester and Beaufort.*

1. THE young King had now come to years of maturity, but he had received his political education mainly from Cardinal Beaufort, and he displayed little independence of judgment as he grew up. He was a prince of amiable disposition, and free from all the ordinary forms of youthful vice, but his intellectual

Henry's character.

endowments were slender, and he became a complete partizan of his grand-uncle the cardinal. His uncle Gloucester he looked upon with positive aversion, partly perhaps in consequence of his immoral life and the scandal arising from the incident of Eleanor Cobham, but also, no doubt, in great part for his persistent advocacy of the policy of continuing the war. For Henry's ardent love for peace, associated in his mind with the principles of Christianity and religion, on which he desired his government to be founded, caused him to give ready ear to politicians who offered to point out a way of terminating the long-standing war with France.

2. Among these politicians there was now another besides Beaufort who began to have considerable influence. William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, the second son of that earl who had been chancellor to Richard II.—a brave man, who had distinguished himself in battle with the French, and had once been taken prisoner—urged upon Henry the policy of a match with Margaret daughter of René Duke of Anjou, titular King of Naples and Jerusalem. She was a woman of great force of character and considerable personal attractions. But the motive which decided Henry in her favour was the same that had induced him to liberate the Duke of Orleans. Her father was the brother of Charles's queen, Mary of Anjou; and Henry considered that by marrying Margaret he would open a surer way for peace with France than by any other method. He accordingly commissioned Suffolk to negotiate the match, and a treaty of peace or truce at the same time.

A.D. 1444. The Earl of Suffolk promotes the King's marriage with Margaret of Anjou.

3. The task was a delicate one. English prejudice might be expected to view such a marriage with dislike, not only because the lady was related to the French king, but because the compact for her marriage included a

cession of territory to her father. The provinces of Maine and Anjou which were then partly in the possession of the English and partly were continually overrun by them, were to be given up to René, while at the same time, in consideration of René's poverty, Henry was to accept his daughter without a marriage portion. Suffolk, however, accepted the commission, and met the Duke of Orleans at Tours, with whom he arranged a truce preparatory to a more enduring peace. The marriage treaty was then concluded, and Suffolk shortly after his return home went over again as Henry's proxy to marry her and convey her to England. She accordingly crossed the sea and landed at Porchester, was married to Henry in person at Titchfield a few days after, and a month later was crowned at Westminster.

A.D. 1445. Henry marries her, May 30.

4. Suffolk now rose highly in the royal favour. He was raised from the dignity of earl to that of marquis, and four years later to that of duke. The Queen especially felt that she owed him much, and the Queen now ruled the King. Suffolk became the leading councillor, whose ascendancy was past dispute. The Duke of Gloucester had less weight than ever, and even Cardinal Beaufort was thrown into the shade. But on one point he knew that his conduct could not escape criticism. No one ventured to speak a word against the King's marriage itself. The Duke of Gloucester even headed an address in parliament, recommending Suffolk to the King's favour for promoting it. But the terms on which it had been negotiated were such as could not possibly be acceptable to the nation, and notwithstanding many precautions taken by Suffolk to guard himself against censure, a day of reckoning was not far off. It was not merely that the giving had been all on one side, and that Henry had accepted a bride

Suffolk is made a duke.

without a portion; but he had given up to King René, the ally and relative of Charles, two rich and important provinces which were the keys of Normandy. Moreover, peace was not made, because, as might have been expected, the very anxiety for it manifested by Henry only served too well the purposes of Charles. Truce only was concluded from time to time with a view to a more lasting treaty, but difficulties were always found about the final settlement, and in the meanwhile the English still put off the fulfilment of the compact with regard to the cession of Maine.

5. At the same time the Duke of Gloucester—'the good Duke Humphrey,' who had always opposed anything like concessions to France—fell more than ever under the King's displeasure. Suffolk had secretly accused him to the King of treason, and it was determined by Henry that he should be arrested. A Parliament was summoned to meet at Bury St. Edmund's in the beginning of the year 1447. Some unusual measures were taken which seemed to be for the protection of the peace against an apprehended revolt. The Duke of Gloucester came from Devizes to take his place among the peers. He was attended by a retinue of eighty gentlemen on horseback; but this does not appear to have been a greater company than his rank was supposed to warrant. On his arrival he was placed under arrest by four or five noblemen sent to him for the purpose by the king. A few days afterwards he died in his lodging.

A.D. 1447.

Arrest and death of the Duke of Gloucester. Feb. 23.

6. Suspicions at once began to be entertained that he had been privately murdered; and the popular odium rested upon Suffolk as the author of the deed. The case is certainly not free from doubt, but it may very well be believed that the death was really due to natural causes. The occurrence, however, added greatly to the deep

feeling of dissatisfaction with which Suffolk's influence over the King was now generally regarded. A number of Gloucester's followers had been arrested at the same time as himself on the pretence that they had conspired to release Dame Eleanor Cobham and make the duke her husband king. Some of them were condemned to die as traitors, but at the intercession of a London clergyman their lives were pardoned by Henry, and after being actually tied up and hanged on the gibbet they were cut down alive and set free. But the charge of disloyalty against the Duke of Gloucester was very generally disbelieved, and attempts were made in successive parliaments to clear his memory of the stain. Owing, however, to the King's own strong belief, whether well or ill founded, in his uncle's guilt, these attempts were for a long time unsuccessful.

7. Within a very short time after the death of Gloucester his old rival, Cardinal Beaufort, also died. The idea that Gloucester had been murdered, and the fact that Beaufort so soon followed him to the grave, made a deep impression on the popular imagination. In after times it was said that the Cardinal had died in agonies of remorse; and this view of the case is vividly represented by Shakspeare in the play. But there is very good warrant for believing it to be unfounded. A witness tells us that when he was on the point of death he summoned the clergy of his cathedral to his palace, caused requiems and other services to be chanted for his departing soul, ordered his will to be read aloud and some corrections to be made in it, and finally took a solemn farewell of all his friends. Apparently, on the rise of Suffolk his advice was no longer asked on state affairs, and he applied himself from that time undisturbed to the duties of his bishopric.

Death of Cardinal Beaufort, April 11.

V. *Loss of Normandy—Fall of the Duke of Suffolk.*

1. The Marquis of Suffolk, as he was at this time called, though soon afterwards he was made duke, was now the only minister or statesman whose advice was much regarded by the King. But after the death of Gloucester the complaints against his policy, especially in relation to the stipulated cession of Maine and Anjou, became so general that he himself requested that his conduct in that transaction might be inquired into. It was accordingly examined by the council, who pronounced him free from blame; and a proclamation was issued shortly afterwards forbidding anyone to propagate scandalous rumours against him on pain of the King's displeasure. As yet, however, Maine had not been actually delivered. As for Anjou, it had never been really in possession of the English, so that no delivery of it was necessary. But the French king, weary of the long delay made by the English in fulfilling their engagements, sent an army to besiege Le Mans. The English authorities remonstrated, and an embassy was sent over in great haste to settle the matter without hostilities. Finally the garrison gave up possession, but protested that in yielding up the city they did not yield up the rights of Henry as sovereign.

Suffolk unpopular.

May 25.

A.D. 1448.

March 15.

2. But in truth the loss of such a province as Maine weakened the hold of the English even in the neighbouring duchy of Normandy, which was now all that remained to them in the north of France except Calais. The government of Normandy was at this time in the hands of Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, a nephew of Cardinal Beaufort, of whose immense wealth he inherited the principal portion. His influence with the King or with Suffolk had procured him this appointment, and the

Duke of York had been recalled from France to make way for him. Unfortunately, he proved himself a sadly incompetent ruler, and the Duke of York, whom he had replaced, was led afterwards to criticise his conduct with extreme severity. It was a time when it was peculiarly important not to give needless provocation to the King of France. Yet with Somerset's full connivance the forces that had been withdrawn from Maine took by assault and pillaged the rich manufacturing town of Fougères, on the borders of the duchy of Brittany.

A.D. 1449. March. Capture of Fougères.

3. The act was a perfidious violation of the truce with France, in which Brittany had been expressly included. It was disavowed by Somerset, who pretended that it had been done without authority; but it was impossible that Charles could be deceived by so impudent a falsehood, and he soon repaid the outrage by a similar manœuvre. He made a secret treaty with the Duke of Brittany. A body of men, professedly in the service of the duke, took by surprise the town of Pont de l'Arche on the Seine—a most important position for the French in the recovery of Normandy. When complaints were made by the English, Charles offered to restore it if they would restore Fougères. All attempts, however, to adjust the matter by conference proved ineffectual. The French followed up their advantage by taking one or two places more. At last open war was declared, and Somerset found when it was too late that he was utterly unprepared for the emergency.

War renewed.

4. He wrote over to England in alarm about the strength of the enemy's musters and the weakness of the English garrisons; but before any efficient succours could be sent a number of towns had already been recovered by the French. In October 1449 they laid siege to Rouen, drove the English out of the

Rouen besieged.

town into the castle, and there shut up Somerset himself, who, to procure his own liberty, had to surrender not only that city but several others, leaving the gallant Talbot Earl of Shrewsbury as a hostage till they were delivered up. At the same time the Duke of Britanny invaded Lower Normandy and recovered Fougères. By the end of the year nearly the whole of Normandy was lost, except Cherbourg, Caen, Bayeux, and a few other towns on or near the coast. In a very few months more, even these were gone. Cherbourg, the last English stronghold, surrendered on August 12, 1450.

Loss of Normandy.

5. As the news of these successive reverses reached England, the general indignation against Suffolk's government could no longer be restrained. Political ballads were circulated in which he was designated jackanapes—the first instance that has yet been found of the use of this expression. He was rhymed at as the ape with his clog who had tied Talbot our good dog. The people at large could hardly be persuaded that selfishness and covetousness were not at the bottom of the mismanagement which had created such disasters, and a most dangerous spirit began to display itself in acts of popular violence. At the beginning of the year 1450 Adam de Moleyns, Bishop of Chichester, who was keeper of the Privy Seal and one of the most learned men in England, was sent to Portsmouth to pay the wages of some soldiers and sailors. He was a wealthy but a very avaricious man. The King's treasury was ill provided with money, and he endeavoured to persuade the men to be content with less than their due. But they broke out into a mutiny, cried out that Normandy had been sold to the French, and accused the bishop of being privy to the transaction; on which they fell upon him and put him to death.

A.D. 1450.

Murder of the Bishop of Chichester, Jan. 9.

6. Some words uttered by this murdered bishop just before his death were reported eagerly by Suffolk's enemies as containing serious reflections on his conduct; and the circumstance probably contributed to his ruin.

Suffolk impeached in parliament.

Within a month after he was impeached in parliament. He was accused of having been for many years a secret friend of France, influenced by corrupt motives to procure the liberation of the Duke of Orleans and the cession of Anjou and Maine. It was also alleged that he had betrayed the designs of England to her enemies, and that he had formed an ambitious project for the elevation of his son to the throne by proposing to marry him to Margaret Beaufort, daughter of the last Duke of Somerset, who stood next in succession to the crown. It was even insinuated that had the match taken effect he would have attempted to depose the King—a charge altogether preposterous and incredible. In another bill of indictment his whole policy was severely censured and attributed to corrupt and treasonable motives.

7. The duke made answer to the first bill before the King and lords, entirely denying the truth of the accusations, and offering to prove them false in any manner the King chose to direct. As to the second he declined to ask a trial by his peers, but trusted he had sufficiently vindicated his loyalty, and expressed himself ready to submit to any judgment the King might think proper to pronounce. On this he was told by the lord chancellor in the King's name that on the more serious charges Henry would not pronounce him either guilty or innocent; but, as he had himself agreed to submit to anything the King thought expedient, Henry, in the exercise of his own discretion, and not by way of sentence, bade him absent himself from England for five years from the first day of May following.

Suffolk is banished,

8. This was imitating the weakness and the tyranny of Richard II.; and, as the issue proved, it protected neither Suffolk nor the King. The duke went down to Ipswich and embarked for Flanders. A London mob endeavoured to intercept him before leaving Westminster, but he took ship in safety. At sea, however, he was pursued by a ship called the 'Nicholas of the Tower,' the crew of which insisted on having him delivered up to them, and he was saluted by the master with the words 'Welcome, traitor!' He was then told that he must die, and after being allowed a day to confess himself, he was beheaded in a small boat. The body was then brought to land and thrown upon the sands at Dover.

and murdered at sea.

VI. *Jack Cade's Rebellion—Loss of Guienne and Gascony.*

1. Within a month after the murder of the Duke of Suffolk a great rebellion took place in Kent and Sussex. The people complained of extortions practised by the King's officers in the collection of the revenue, and also that their grievances could not be heard because the knights of the shire were not freely elected. As their leader they selected a man of some ability, who called himself by the name of John Mortimer, and professed to be a cousin of the Duke of York; but it was afterwards discovered that he was an Irishman, whose real name was Jack Cade. He was, however, a very good disciplinarian and kept his forces together in excellent order. On June 1 they encamped upon Blackheath. The King was at that time holding a Parliament at Leicester; but he immediately dissolved the legislature and came up to London. With an army of 20,000 men he marched against the rebels, who with-

A.D. 1450. Jack Cade's Rebellion. May.

drew before him, so that the King occupied their position on Blackheath. A detachment under Sir Humphrey Stafford and his cousin William Stafford went forward to pursue the insurgents, but was defeated at Sevenoaks and both the Staffords slain. The nobles who were with the King now declared that they could not keep their men together unless the King would consent to dismiss and punish some of his principal advisers. To satisfy them, Lord Say was arrested and sent to the Tower. But the concession was of little service. The royal forces disbanded, and though the city of London offered the King their services, he thought it best to withdraw and retired to Kenilworth.

2. The result of this was that the citizens consented to admit the rebels. Cade passed over London Bridge with his followers. He struck his sword against London Stone and said, 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city.' He caused Lord Say to be fetched from the Tower and arraigned before a court at the Guildhall. The unfortunate nobleman claimed to be tried by his peers; but he was hurried off and beheaded in Cheapside. One Crowmer, sheriff of Kent, who was Lord Say's son-in-law, was beheaded at the same time in Cade's presence; and the two heads were barbarously carried through the streets on poles and made to kiss each other. Cade now began to relax discipline. He entered the houses of unpopular citizens and pillaged them, so that men who had anything to lose became alarmed for their property. For three days he held possession of the city, retiring every evening into Southwark for the night; but the mayor and aldermen applied to Lord Scales, who had the keeping of the Tower, for a force to drive him out; and a hard-fought battle took place on London Bridge during the night between the 5th and 6th of July. In the morning the result was still uncertain, when a truce was

agreed to for a few hours, and such of the King's councillors as remained in London offered a general pardon to the insurgents on condition of their laying down their arms. The offer was very generally accepted, and most of the men returned homewards. Cade was pardoned under the name of Mortimer, his real name being still unknown. But doubtful, perhaps, lest he might still be made responsible, he broke open the King's Bench and Marshalsea prisons and formed a new company out of the criminals detained there. With this force he retired to Rochester and tried to raise new disturbances, but these were soon quelled, and Cade was pursued out of Kent into Sussex, where he was captured by Alexander Iden, a gentleman who was about this time appointed sheriff of the former county in place of the murdered Crowmer. On being taken, however, he received a mortal wound and he died before he could be conveyed to London. His head was fixed upon London Bridge with the face looking towards Kent.

3. It was now evident that the King required the aid of some strong hand to administer the government. Even before the fall of Suffolk there had been much complaint that he did not employ the Duke of York to redress the wrongs of the people. But the Duke of York had in fact been sent to Ireland as the King's lieutenant some time before, mainly through the influence of Somerset, and in order that he might be out of the way. The crisis, however, was now so urgent that he appears to have thought himself justified in coming over without leave. He crossed the Channel to Beaumaris in Anglesea, where attempts were made to stop his landing, then collecting a body of his followers in Wales, marched on to London and presented himself before the King. Efforts were made in several places to arrest his progress or prevent

The Duke of York comes over from Ireland.

his friends from joining him upon the way; but they were ineffectual as regards himself. When he reached the King's presence, the first thing that he did was to demand and obtain a repudiation by Henry himself of certain imputations of disloyalty that had been made against him, and which had been the pretext of many attempts against his person. He then presented a petition for better administration of justice, complaining that persons indicted of treason or accused of it by public rumour were not brought to trial or even put under arrest; and he so far prevailed that the King promised to establish a new council, of which York himself should be a member, to inquire into all abuses.

4. The Duke of Somerset, who had come over from Normandy just before York himself came over from Ireland, now found himself in a painful situation. Favoured though he was by the court, he was one of the most unpopular men in England. He was generally considered responsible for the surrender of Caen and the total loss of Normandy; and when Parliament met towards the close of the year to consider the state of matters in France, he failed to satisfy the peers of the integrity of his conduct. He was accordingly placed under arrest. But owing to the favour of the court he did not long remain in custody. The King, in defiance of popular opinion, not only released him from confinement, but made him captain of Calais and gave him the control of the royal household. For a whole year afterwards his ascendancy was undisputed, and the Duke of York found it advisable to withdraw from court to his own castle of Ludlow. But meanwhile a series of reverses overtook the English arms in France, and the loss of Normandy was followed by the no less complete loss of Guienne and Gas-

Somerset is arrested; but soon after released and in favour.

A.D. 1451. Loss of Guienne and Gascony.

cony. First Bordeaux capitulated, then Bayonne; then the whole south of France surrendered, and Calais was now all that was left of English possessions upon the Continent. Nor was even this last stronghold safe; for not only at this time, but during the whole remainder of Henry's reign, there were continual alarms lest the French should recover Calais also.

5. It was impossible that the Duke of York could view this state of matters with indifference,—especially when his rival Somerset had the ear of the King and was instilling continually into Henry's mind distrust and suspicion against himself. He accordingly mustered a number of his followers and marched up to London. The King and Somerset had full warning, as York had made no secret of his intentions, and having collected another army on their side, set out to meet him. York, however, avoided an engagement and pressed on to London, which he hoped would have opened its gates to him; but being denied entrance there, he crossed the Thames at Kingston Bridge and marched into Kent, taking up his position at Dartford. The King's army followed and encamped a few miles from him upon Blackheath. A battle might now easily have taken place, but some of the lords on the King's side made proposals for a compromise, and Bishop Waynflete of Winchester, with the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick and some other noblemen, were sent to the Duke of York in embassy to ask the reason why he appeared in arms. The duke replied that he intended no ill to the King or his council, but only desired the removal of the Duke of Somerset and other persons by whom the people had been misgoverned. Several of the lords on the King's side were so far favourable to this object, that they induced the King to return an answer that Somerset should be placed in custody

York marches to London. A.D. 1452.

March 1.

until he had acquitted himself of such charges as York would bring against him. With this promise the Duke of York was so entirely satisfied that he at once broke up his camp, dismissed his army, and repaired alone to the King's tent to declare his loyalty. But here he found himself deceived. Somerset had not been placed in confinement according to promise, but was attending on the King just as before; and the Duke of York had in fact placed himself in the power of his rival.

He is persuaded to dismiss his forces; but faith is not kept with him.

6. Somerset, however, did not dare to make an extreme use of this advantage. The duke had still on the Welsh borders about 10,000 men, who, it was said, were actually on the march to London, led by his son Edward Earl of March, a boy of ten years of age. It was resolved, therefore, merely to demand from him an oath of allegiance as a guarantee for his future loyalty. This oath he took at St. Paul's on March 10, 1452, and was allowed to go at large.

A.D. 1452. March 10.

7. After this the King issued a general amnesty on Good Friday, April 7, and civil dissensions were for a while allayed. Towards the close of the same year an attempt was made to recover Guienne and Gascony from the French. The inhabitants of those provinces found themselves more severely taxed by their new masters than they had been when under English rule, and they offered their allegiance again to the King of England. A force was despatched under Talbot Earl of Shrewsbury, which at once took possession of Bordeaux and in a wonderfully short space of time succeeded in recovering for a while nearly all the lost provinces. But in the beginning of the following June, the French king, having carefully matured his plans, retook, one by one, the fortresses north of the Gironde, and laid siege to Castillon on the

Attempt to recover Guienne and Gascony.

A.D. 1453. June.

Dordogne. This place was important as giving its possessors free navigation into the Gironde; and the Earl of Shrewsbury, hearing that it was in danger, suddenly left Bordeaux with a rather inadequate force to compel the enemy if possible to raise the siege. Urged on by a false report that the French were in retreat, he pursued in the direction of their supposed flight, and found a well-ordered army with artillery drawn up in battle array. With heedless impetuosity he rushed upon the enemy, his followers uttering their usual war-cry, 'A Talbot! St. George!' His gallant army was mowed down by the fire of the French guns or cut to pieces in hand-to-hand encounter, and he himself fell in the midst of the fight. His body was found covered with wounds on the limbs and on the face.

Talbot defeated and slain.

8. With the death of Talbot all hope of the English retaining their hold on Gascony was practically at an end. Castillon at once surrendered; then a number of other places; and finally Bordeaux, after every other stronghold had been evacuated, was obliged to submit to Charles. Thus was Gascony finally lost, after having been in English possession, with little interruption, for the space of three centuries.

A.D. 1453. October 17.

Gascony is finally lost.

VII. *The King's Illness—Civil War.*

1. About this time King Henry fell seriously ill, and lost entirely, for the time, the use of his mental faculties. In October he became a father, the Queen, after eight years of married life, giving birth to a son who was baptized by the name of Edward; but the news could not be communicated to the King so as to reach his understanding. In this crisis the government naturally came to a standstill, and the councillors about the King, however unwillingly, could no longer avoid

Henry loses his faculties.

seeking the advice of all the peers of the realm, including the Duke of York. The result was that before the end of the year Somerset was accused of treason by the Duke of Norfolk, and committed to the Tower. Norfolk demanded that the circumstances of the loss of Normandy and of Guienne should be made the subject of a criminal inquiry according to the laws of France; and that other matters relating to Somerset's administration should be investigated according to the law of England. Somerset, however, remained in prison a whole year and upwards of two months, without being brought to trial.

2. Meanwhile the King's infirmity made it necessary that some one should be appointed to act in his name. Parliament had been summoned to meet at Reading on February 11, 1454. It was immediately adjourned to Westminster and a commission was given to the Duke of York to act as the King's lieutenant on its reassembling. Soon after it met again Cardinal Kemp, Archbishop of Canterbury, died. He was an accomplished statesman, and held at the time the office of lord chancellor. It was important that both the primacy and the lord chancellorship should be filled up without delay; and a deputation was sent by the lords in Parliament to Windsor to ascertain whether the King then possessed such a degree of consciousness as to comprehend the situation. But the deputation were obliged to report that their efforts were an utter failure. They waited on the King and expressed in the first place their anxiety to hear of his recovery; but the King gave no answer. Not a word did he utter; not a nod or faintest gesture implied that he understood a single thing that was said to him. To provide, therefore, for the necessary government of the kingdom, the lords in Parliament appointed the Duke of York Protector of England.

A.D. 1454. Feb. 11.

York made Protector.

3. For the first time Margaret of Anjou now found herself entirely without influence in the affairs of the kingdom, which she had, in fact, ruled for years in her husband's name. York exercised his new power with vigour, and put down with remarkable facility some factious disturbances in the North. But his authority was shortlived; for at Christmas the King regained possession of his faculties, and as a necessary consequence the power of the Protector terminated. The Duke of Somerset was still in prison, but was presently released on bail; after which, at a meeting of the council held before the King, his sureties were discharged and he was declared free from any suspicion of disloyalty. It was now clear that the King would be again guided entirely by the advice of Somerset. York was deprived even of the government of Calais. The Earl of Salisbury, who had been appointed chancellor about the time that York was made Protector, was removed from his post, and Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, was appointed in his room. York and his friends knew well that they were out of favour and held in great distrust.

The King recovers. A.D. 1455.

4. A council being summoned to meet at Leicester for the surety of the King's person, the Duke of York, with the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, who had withdrawn into the North, determined to go up to the King with an armed force. They feared that if they attended the council they would be entrapped: but if the King were in any real danger they professed themselves ready to offer him their services. They wrote to Archbishop Bourchier to explain to Henry their motives for taking up arms, and they marched on till they came to St. Alban's. Here they were met by the King and Somerset; and a sharp battle took place, in which Somerset and a number of other lords were slain, and the

A.D. 1455.

King was wounded in the neck with an arrow. The Duke of York was master of the field; but he and the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick came after the engagement and knelt before the King, beseeching his forgiveness and disowning all intention to do him injury. Henry forgave them willingly and went on with them to London, where they were received in triumph the following day.

May 22. First battle of St. Alban's.

5. A Parliament was immediately afterwards summoned in which the acts of the Duke of York and his friends were declared to have been those of good and loyal subjects. It was prorogued till November. In the interval the King fell ill again, and when it reassembled York was again nominated as Protector. The Parliament also determined that the Protectorship this time should not cease by the mere fact of the King being once more able to exercise his functions, but that whenever the King was so far recovered York should be discharged of his functions in full parliament.

York again Protector,

6. In February following he was so discharged. The King had regained his health, and was once more able to perform the duties of royalty. Apparently York still retained some influence in the conduct of affairs, but the King now governed in his own name. Things generally were in an uncertain state for about two years. The court seems to have moved about a good deal at a distance from London. The Queen kept at a distance from the King. The Scots attacked the borders and the French insulted the coast with impunity. At length it was felt desirable that there should be a reconciliation between York and his friends on the one side, and the Queen and her friends on the other. A great council was held in London in February 1458. York, Salisbury, and Warwick took up their quarters in the city; but the Duke of

and again discharged of the office. A.D. 1456. Feb. 25.

A.D. 1458. February.

Somerset and other lords of the Queen's party were not admitted within it lest they should take occasion to revenge the death of their fathers and other relatives at St. Alban's. Conferences took place daily between the two parties in the suburbs, in the morning at the Blackfriars and in the afternoon at the Whitefriars in Fleet Street. In the end terms of agreement were come to by which the Yorkists undertook to bestow a certain sum in masses for the souls of the lords slain at St. Alban's, and the other party to forego all claims and actions against their opponents arising out of that battle.

Reconciliation of the opposite parties.

7. A great procession was held in honour of the reconciliation. The rival lords marched together to St. Paul's. The young Duke of Somerset went hand in hand with Salisbury; the Duke of Exeter with the Earl of Warwick. The King then followed, wearing his crown upon his head. The Duke of York and the Queen walked after him, arm in arm. This goodwill and amity, however, scarcely lasted a whole year. A quarrel between the servants of the King and the Earl of Warwick led to imputations against the earl's loyalty, and he retired to Calais, of which place he had been made lord deputy. The Queen then endeavoured to arrest his father the Earl of Salisbury, whom she commissioned Lord Audley to intercept on a journey. But the earl, being forewarned, had collected a considerable force, and completely overthrew Lord Audley at Bloreheath in Staffordshire on Sunday, September 23, 1459.

A.D. 1459.

Battle of Bloreheath. Sept. 23

8. It was now evident that the question must be fought out between the party of the Queen and that of the Duke of York. The duke mustered his forces in the marches of Wales, and was joined at Ludlow by the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, the latter having come over from

Calais to give him aid. An army commanded by the King himself approached Ludlow. The confederate lords endeavoured to avoid a conflict by strong protestations of loyalty, declaring that they only remained under arms in self-defence. But the King issued proclamations of pardon to all who would desert their standard, and when the two armies lay opposite each other, one Andrew Trollope, who had come over from Calais with the Earl of Warwick, withdrew by night with a considerable body of men and went over to the King. His defection made the Yorkists despair of further resistance. They fled and left their banners on the field. The duke and his second son, Edmund Earl of Rutland, escaped by Wales into Ireland. His eldest, Edward Earl of March, along with the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury, passed into Devonshire, where they took ship and sailed, first to Guernsey and afterwards to Calais.

Dispersion of the Yorkists.

9. In November a Parliament met at Coventry in which the Duke of York and all his party were attainted. But the duke was safe in Ireland, and Warwick could not be dispossessed of Calais, where the soldiers were devoted to him. The latter had also the command of the King's fleet, having been in the preceding year entrusted with the keeping of the sea, in which he had distinguished himself by a splendid victory over a Spanish fleet. It was in vain that other persons were appointed to replace him in either of his two commands. The young Duke of Somerset, who was sent over as Captain of Calais was unable to take possession of his post. He was obliged to land at some little distance from Calais, and the very sailors who had brought him over conveyed their ships afterwards into Calais haven and offered their services to the Earl of Warwick. Many friends at the same time came flocking over from England to join the Earls of March, Salisbury, and War-

They are attainted.

wick. Measures were concerted by these lords for the invasion of England, and the Earl of Warwick sailed to Ireland, where he arranged a plan of action in concert with the Duke of York, and returned to Calais.

VIII. *The Duke of York's Claim—His Death—Henry Deposed.*

1. At length, in June 1460, the three earls crossed the Channel. There went over with them a papal legate named Coppini who had been sent to England in the preceding year and was returning from a fruitless mission, when those lords persuaded him to stay a while at Calais and use his influence to promote peace between them and the King. They landed at Sandwich, and were received with joy by a great multitude of people. Archbishop Bourchier met them and conducted them to London. The legate in their company displayed the standard of the Church. Their followers increased in numbers as they went along, and the city of London opened its gates to them. They published manifestoes declaring how they had been debarred from setting before the King himself matters of great importance to the kingdom, how the laws were ill administered and justice was perverted; how the people were grievously taxed and the patrimony of the Crown was wasted by men who had too much influence over the King; how the King's purveyors were driven to great extortion to supply the wants of the household; and how the King was forcing every township to raise men for him at its own cost. Moreover letters had been written by authority encouraging the French to attempt the siege of Calais, and the Irish chieftains to rise against the English.

A.D. 1460. June. March, Salisbury and Warwick return to England.

2. The King collected his forces at Coventry and went on to Northampton, where he was met by the army of the confederate lords. In a brief but sharp engagement the royal forces were defeated and the King himself taken prisoner. He was conducted to London, and of course the government of the kingdom fell into the hands of the victors. New officers of state were appointed and a Parliament was summoned which met at Westminster in October. Here the attainders of the Duke of York and his party were reversed. But before it had sat many days the Duke of York himself came over from Ireland, and his appearance gave rise to proceedings of a kind altogether unusual.

Battle of Northampton, July 10.

3. He arrived in London with a retinue of 500 men, proceeded to Westminster, and took up quarters in the royal palace. On October 16 he entered the House of Lords, took his seat on the King's throne, and delivered to the chancellor a writing in which he claimed the crown for himself by lineal descent from Edward III., and maintained that Henry was not rightful king. He was, in fact, descended from Lionel Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of John of Gaunt, from whom Henry and the last two kings had derived their title. Many historians have been of opinion that he had been ambitious to vindicate this claim all along; but it must be confessed that before this time he had always conducted himself with remarkable moderation, and when we consider the bad faith he had repeatedly experienced from the opposite party, owing to the weakness of the King and the overbearing character of his consort, we can quite well understand that he may have been led to advance his pretensions from other motives than mere ambition. At the same time, it naturally seemed to the peers an unprecedented thing to

York claims the crown.

deprive a king like Henry of his crown after he and his family had worn it for three generations. The greater number of the lords stayed away from the House; but the duke insisting on an answer, those present referred the matter to the King himself, desiring to know what he could allege in opposition to the duke's claim. The King consulted his judges and lawyers, but they declined to advise him in a matter of such grave responsibility; so that finally it was referred again to the lords, who gave it as their opinion that the duke's title could not be defeated. But as Henry VI. had been actually crowned as king and they had all sworn fealty to him, it was suggested as a compromise and agreed to by both parties, that he should be allowed to retain his crown for life, but that the duke and his heirs should succeed after Henry's death. This arrangement was embodied in an act of parliament which received the royal assent; and Henry, wearing his crown upon his head, made a public procession to St. Paul's, accompanied by the duke as heir-apparent, to give it greater solemnity.

4. Queen Margaret, however, was not so easily satisfied with this tame surrender of the rights of her son. Since the battle of Northampton she had retired into Wales, and afterwards into Scotland; but a strong party in the north of England maintained her cause The Duke of York proceeded northwards, and towards the end of the year took up his quarters at Sandal Castle. From this position he allowed himself to be lured to attack the Queen's adherents at Wakefield, where his army suffered a total defeat and he himself was slain in the field. The victors were most merciless and insolent. It is true there is some uncertainty about the stories which were reported by writers of somewhat later date. Queen Margaret herself is said to have been present at the battle; and Lord

Battle of Wakefield, Dec. 30.

Clifford, who, having lost his father at the battle of St. Alban's, nourished a deadly feeling of hatred and revenge against the Duke of York, presented his slain enemy's head to Margaret with the words, 'Madam, your war is done. Here is your king's ransom.' The same Clifford, after the battle, also put to death most cruelly the duke's second son, Edmund Earl of Rutland, a young man not quite eighteen years of age, whose fate excited great compassion, and whom later writers represented to have been a mere boy. But from what the few really contemporary writers say in reference to this battle it may be doubted whether Margaret arrived upon the scene till after it was fought. There seems no question, however, that in this particular engagement there was manifested a spirit of ferocity and vindictiveness which had not been seen before, and which afterwards caused these wars to be looked back upon with feelings of peculiar pain and horror. The Duke of York's head, which Margaret caused to be crowned with a paper crown, was stuck upon the walls of York city. And the Earl of Salisbury, having been taken prisoner in the fight, was beheaded, and his head was placed there too.

5. Edward Earl of March, the Duke of York's eldest son, had left London shortly before his father and gone into the borders of Wales. He was at Gloucester when he received the news of his father's death. He immediately moved on to Shrewsbury. The men of the country flocked to him in numbers, eager to offer their services against Queen Margaret. But hearing that Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, the half-brother of King Henry, was raising forces in Wales along with James Butler, Earl of Ormond, who brought some bands of Irishmen into the field, he turned back and met them at Mortimer's Cross to the south of Wigmore, in Herefordshire,

A.D. 1461.

Battle of Mortimer's Cross, Feb. 2.

where he thoroughly defeated them on Candlemas Day, 1461. It is said that on the morning of that day, just before the battle, he was struck by the appearance of the sun; for it seemed as if three suns were seen together in the sky, and that they all at once merged into one,—an omen of approaching success by which he was greatly encouraged. The Earls of Pembroke and Wiltshire fled from the field; but Sir Owen Tudor, Pembroke's father, was taken prisoner, and was beheaded at Hereford along with some others.

6. This Sir Owen Tudor deserves notice here as being the ancestor of a line of kings and queens who afterwards sat upon the English throne. He was a Welsh chieftain of handsome person and great accomplishments, who boasted a pedigree from the ancient line of Cadwallader, the last king of the Britons. Perhaps the possession of such a lineage placed him, in his own eyes, on a level with kings and princes; but whether it was due to this, or to his own personal merits, he succeeded in producing such an impression on the French princess, Catherine, widow of Henry V., that she became his wife. By her he had, besides some other children, two sons, who being the half-brothers of Henry VI. were afterwards raised to the peerage. Edmund, the eldest, was created Earl of Richmond, and became the father of King Henry VII. Jasper, the second, was made Earl of Pembroke; and it is he who was, as we have seen, defeated by young Edward Earl of March at Mortimer's Cross.

Sir Owen Tudor.

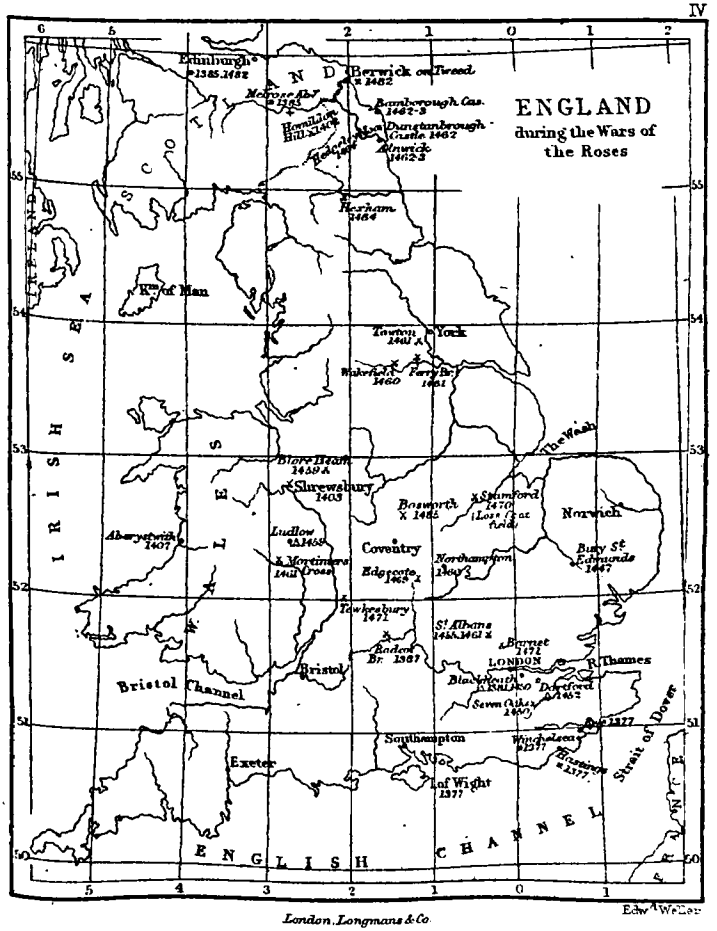
7. But although Edward had gained a signal victory, Queen Margaret had profited by the resistance offered to him in Wales, and drew towards London with a host of northern men who devastated the country as they went along. The Earl of Warwick brought the King out of London and met her at St. Alban's, where, for a second

time, a battle was fought in this civil war. On this occasion the Queen's party were victorious and the Yorkists were put to flight. The King, who had been left behind, was again at liberty and was rejoined by his wife and son. He issued a proclamation against the Earl of March, who was now on his way towards London; but Edward, joining his forces with the remainder of Warwick's army, marched on unopposed and was received with acclamations as he entered the city. For the citizens, who had always favoured his father, were now driven to take part with him all the more in consequence of what they heard of the depredations committed by Margaret's northern troops.

Second battle of St. Alban's. Feb. 17.

8. Being therefore now lodged in the capital and assured of the friendship of the people, Edward summoned a council of lords, before whom he declared his right to the crown of England; and it was determined to depose King Henry on the ground that he had broken the agreement made with the Duke of York in the last Parliament, and shown himself besides incompetent to rule. The lords accordingly named Edward king. That day, at a great meeting in St. John's Field, the people were asked if they would accept the Earl of March as their sovereign. Cries of 'Yea, yea. King Edward!' filled the air, with great shouts and clapping of hands. A deputation of lords and commons then waited upon him at Baynard's Castle, the mansion of his father in Thames Street, to notify to him his election as king. He accepted the dignity, proceeded in state to St. Paul's and afterwards to Westminster, and from that day began to rule.

The Earl of March declared king.



London, Longmans & Co.

Edw.d Weller

Explanation

⚔ *Indicates a Battle Field*

⚔ *Attached to a date indicates that the place was taken sacked or ravaged at that date*

∧ *Indicates an Encampment*

A mere date following the name of a place indicates a treaty or some other point of interest connected with the place which will be found recorded in the history

CHAPTER VIII.

EDWARD IV.

I. *Triumph of the House of York.*

1. EDWARD was king; but Henry and Margaret had withdrawn into the North, and an army of 60,000 men under Somerset lay near York. Both Edward and his supporters prepared for a decisive struggle. The Duke of Norfolk went down into his own country to summon his retainers, the Earl of Warwick left London with a great body of men, and Edward himself followed northwards a few days later. The more advanced divisions of their forces had reached Pomfret and had secured the passage of the river Aire at Ferrybridge, when Lord Fitzwalter, who kept the bridge, was surprised and slain by Lord Clifford in the early morning. Lord Falconbridge, however, came up immediately afterwards and defeated Clifford, who was also slain in the encounter. The united forces of Warwick and of Edward then pushed on in the direction of York, and between the villages of Towton and Saxton, about eight miles from the city, found the whole army of the enemy drawn up to give them battle. The conflict began about four o'clock in the afternoon, the day after the battle of Ferrybridge. The fighting was continued through the night, and renewed with vigour next morning about nine o'clock, notwithstanding a heavy snow shower which blew in the faces of the Lancastrians. That day was Palm Sunday. The forces engaged on either side were enormous, and never was battle fought so obstinately. About mid-day the Duke of Norfolk came up

A.D. 1461.

Battle of Ferrybridge, March 27,

and Towton, March 29.

to the assistance of the Yorkists, with fresh forces that he had levied in Norfolk. Still the Lancastrians kept the field, fighting most obstinately till about three in the afternoon. But their ranks being broken they were at last compelled to give way, and were pursued in various directions, no quarter being granted by the conquerors. Some were drowned in attempting to cross rivers; numbers were cut down in the pursuit, and the way was strewn with corpses for ten miles, up to the very gates of York. On the field itself, after the battle, the spectacle was most ghastly. The snow was crimsoned with the blood of the slain, and as it melted a crimson stream poured down every furrow. The dead were heaped up in trenches, and their numbers, counted by the heralds, were declared to amount to no less than eight-and-twenty thousand.

2. King Henry and Margaret fled towards Scotland, while Edward entered York in triumph. The power of Henry was completely crushed, and the first step he took to recover it was not much calculated to advance his object. Driven to seek refuge in Scotland he delivered up Berwick to the Scots and encouraged them to undertake the siege of Carlisle. But the latter place was relieved by Lord Montague, and Edward having returned to London was crowned on Sunday June 28. His two brothers, George and Richard, who had been sent abroad for security, returned and were created dukes, with the titles of Clarence and Gloucester. Parliament was then summoned to meet at Westminster in November, and an act was passed confirming Edward's claim to the crown by hereditary right, and declaring the three preceding kings to have been usurpers. All who had been active in the cause of the House of Lancaster were attainted and their possessions forfeited. Henry himself and Queen Margaret were declared traitors.

Coronation of Edward.

3. Still, the whole kingdom was not for some time absolutely in Edward's power. There were castles in Wales which held out for Henry, and Margaret hoped, with the aid of the French and Scots, to make a successful invasion. She sailed from Kirkcudbright through the Irish Channel into Brittany, and, repairing to the French Court, made a treaty with the new King of France, Louis XI., by which she engaged to surrender Calais as the price of his assistance. Louis lent her some money and a small force, with which she returned to Scotland, and made an attempt to invade England by sea. But a violent storm arose, some of the vessels were sunk and others driven to land on Holy Island off Northumberland, and Margaret herself only escaped in a small fishing-smack to Berwick. Shortly afterwards, however, she made another attempt by land, and, with the aid of the Borderers, entered Northumberland. Her efforts were at first crowned with success. Three strong castles, Bamborough, Dunstanborough, and Alnwick fell into her hands. But before the end of the year two of them were recovered by the Earl of Warwick, while Edward himself was advancing northwards to drive out the invaders; and on Twelfth Day, Alnwick, the sole remaining fortress, capitulated to Lord Hastings.

A.D. 1462. April 3

A.D. 1463. January 6.

4. The cause of Lancaster was now desperate. The castle of Harlech in Wales alone held out for Henry, who appears at this time to have gone thither from Scotland. The Duke of Somerset made his peace with Edward, and was received into favour. Sir Ralph Percy, too, on the surrender of Bamborough and Dunstanborough, had agreed to swear allegiance to Edward on condition that those castles should again be committed to his custody. As for Margaret, she appears to have met with many adventures, and to have narrowly escaped falling

into the hands of the English. At least there is an anecdote related of her by an old French chronicler referring to this period, which we will here translate from the original.

5. 'The Queen of England having lost herself one day in a forest in England, and her son along with her, they were taken by thieves, who robbed them and stripped them of all their valuables, and it must be supposed would have murdered them, but that they squabbled among themselves about the division of the jewels, till they came to blows. Then the Queen, seeing them fight, took up her son in her arms, and fled into the depth of the forest, where she was so overcome with fatigue that she could go no further. Here she found a brigand to whom she gave her son to carry, saying to him, "Here, my friend, save the son of your king!" The brigand took him with very good will, and they departed, so that shortly after they came by sea to Sluys. And from Sluys she went to Bruges, her son still with her; where she was received very honourably, while her husband, King Henry, was in Wales, in one of the strongest places in England.'

Adventure of Queen Margaret.

6. In Flanders Margaret sought the aid of Philip Duke of Burgundy, but he refused to take her part against Edward. He, however, relieved her necessities, and she retired to the duchy of Bar in Lorraine which belonged to her father, where she remained for some time, watching the course of events.

She retires to Lorraine.

7. The triumph of Edward, meanwhile, was not undisturbed. The Scots invaded England again, and retook the castle of Bamborough. Men to whom much had been entrusted proved unworthy of the confidence reposed in them. Sir Ralph Percy, notwithstanding his late oath of fealty to King Edward, turned traitor once more, and in concert with a certain Sir Ralph Gray, who was dis-

appointed of being made governor of Alnwick Castle, surprised that fortress and delivered the governor, Sir John Astley, into the hands of the French. A little later the Duke of Somerset also declared again for Henry, and passed from Wales into Northumberland to join with Percy; while King Henry once more reappeared upon the Borders with a body of Scots and refugees.

A.D. 1464.

But the Earl of Warwick's brother, John Nevill, Lord Montague, whom Edward had appointed lieutenant of the North, first defeated and killed Percy in battle at Hedgeley Moor some miles south of Wooler, and next overthrew the forces of Henry and the Duke of Somerset at Hexham. King Henry himself fled away and lived in concealment for more than a year afterwards. But Somerset was taken, and in consideration of his treason was beheaded after the battle; and several other of the leaders of this movement were executed in the same manner shortly afterwards at Newcastle and at York.

Battles of Hedgeley Moor, April 25, and Hexham, May 8.

II. *Edward's Marriage—Louis XI.*

1. So this last effort of the Lancastrians was crushed before Edward himself appeared in arms to oppose it. Edward actually, however, did leave London before the end of April, and his journey northward led to most important consequences of another kind; but the victory had already been gained for him in his absence, long before he could reach Northumberland. Nor does it appear in fact that he was aware that there was any serious rebellion to put down. By April 30 he had reached Stony Stratford, we know not with what amount of retinue; but so little was his mind occupied with military matters, that he stole off early on the following morning to pay a secret visit to Grafton, the residence of the

old Duchess of Bedford, widow of that nobleman who had been Regent of France during the minority of Henry VI. This duchess since her husband's death had been married to Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers, and she had a grown-up daughter, Elizabeth, who had been married to a certain Sir John Grey, but lost her husband at the second battle of St. Alban's, where he had fought on the side of King Henry. Edward was greatly fascinated by the charms of this widow; and though he spent on this occasion a very brief time in her company and returned in a few hours to Stony Stratford, he was, at his return, a married man. The marriage ceremony had been performed in secret at Grafton, but he did not dare avow the fact for some months afterwards.

Edward's marriage, May 1.

2. He was at this time but two-and-twenty years of age, but he had already been often urged to marry. An alliance with the royal family of France or Spain it was thought would do much to secure his throne; but Edward cared far less for such considerations than for the gratification of his own pleasure, which indeed was not always so innocent as on this occasion. Good fortune, far beyond his own merits, had hitherto attended his course, and leaving the cares of state to others he had given himself up to the vices of a libertine. His marriage, too, was an act of blind imprudence. From the manner in which it was contracted it disappointed the Earl of Warwick and others who had expected him to be guided by their counsels; while, on the other hand, the comparatively humble rank of the lady excited the jealousy of many powerful families.

3. But at Michaelmas following Edward publicly acknowledged her as his queen, and next year she was crowned with great solemnity. Riches and honours were showered upon her relations. Her father, from being a simple baron, was created Earl Rivers. Her brother

Anthony had already married a wealthy heiress and received the title of Lord Scales, but another brother, five sisters, and her son by her first husband, Thomas Grey, were also married to leading members of the nobility. These promotions were looked upon with anything but satisfaction by many who had entertained hopes of securing for their own families the heirs or heiresses monopolised by the Woodvilles. Offices of state, too, were taken from old friends of the House of York and conferred upon the Queen's relations. Lord Mountjoy was discharged of the office of lord treasurer to make room for her father Rivers, who on the resignation of the Earl of Worcester was also created lord high constable.

4. With these changes came also a change of policy. Of all Edward's councillors the most powerful was Richard Earl of Warwick, the owner of immense possessions and the governor of the important dependency of Calais. It was owing to Warwick more than to any other man that Edward had been seated on the throne. No other nobleman in England could call into the field such an army of feudal vassals and retainers. No other nobleman kept such an enormous household. When he came to London, the carcasses of six oxen were consumed at a breakfast at Warwick's Inn in Holborn. His wealth, his power, his experience, and the distinguished services he had done for Edward's house gave him a right to direct the young King's counsels to which no one else could naturally pretend. Moreover his brother Lord Montague had won for Edward the victory over Henry VI. at Hexham, for which the King had worthily promoted him to the dignity of Earl of Northumberland, with a grant of all the forfeited lands of the Percies. Also his youngest brother George, whom the King had promoted from the bishopric of Exeter to the archbishopric of York, was Edward's chancellor.

The Earl of Warwick.

5. But with the marriage of the King Warwick and the Nevills must have known that their influence over him was certain to decline. The act itself, indeed, was something like a forcible breaking away from their rule; for Warwick had already set on foot negotiations for marrying the King to Bona of Savoy, who was sister to the queen of Louis XI. of France. It is not true, as stated by some old historians, that Warwick was at the time absent at the French Court for the express purpose of concluding this match; but there is quite distinct evidence that he had promoted it. Warwick's policy evidently was to strengthen the new dynasty upon the throne by a strict and cordial alliance with the French king. But Edward and his new advisers had quite different ideas. To them the friendship or enmity of France was a matter of comparative indifference; and they turned their eyes in preference to France's powerful vassal the Duke of Burgundy. The French monarchy was not yet so strong that England need have any great cause to fear it as a rival, while the Court of Burgundy was the most magnificent in Europe. Besides, the traditional policy of England was to humble France as much as possible, and Edward was quite disposed to follow it out if once his own dominions were at peace under his rule.

Intended marriage of the King to Bona of Savoy.

6. It may be questioned, indeed, whether an alliance with France would have been really so beneficial to him as Warwick supposed. The King of France, Louis XI., was the most subtle and astute politician of his time. He had ascended the throne in the same year as Edward, and the state of his kingdom hitherto had made it a far greater object with him to have peace with England than it was even for Edward to be undisturbed by foreign invasion while putting down Lancastrian insurrections. In the very year after Edward's

A.D. 1465.

marriage the throne of Louis was exposed to extreme and unprecedented danger. A league was formed against him by the great vassals of the French Crown, the Duke of Burgundy and his son the Count of Charolois, the Dukes of Britanny and Bourbon, and some others, with the view of securing their independence by united action. They called it the League of the Public Weal, and they won over the King's own brother, the Duke of Berry, to take part in it. This formidable confederacy engaged the forces of Louis in a pitched battle at Montlhery, a few miles south of Paris. The field was most obstinately contested on both sides, and when night fell the issue was still undecided. But Louis withdrew his forces in the night time, and bent every effort to fortify Paris itself, which he succeeded in making so strong that the allies could not effectually besiege it. After a few months the war was terminated by the treaty of Conflans, in which Louis was obliged to make considerable concessions; but, profiting afterwards by the dissensions which sprang up among the confederates, he very soon recovered his lost ground and became much stronger than he had been before.

League of the Public Weal in France.

July 16.

October 5.

7. This struggle between Louis and his powerful vassals was essentially the great struggle that occupied him through his whole reign. It was his part to recover and reanimate the depressed and all but extinguished monarchy of France, to vindicate the independence of her Crown and put an end to domestic feuds. As regards foreign princes his only anxiety was that they should leave him at peace to work out this great home problem undisturbed; and perhaps the very insignificance to which French royalty had been reduced in some degree favoured his design. For Louis was a king that scorned appearances, and could well be content

Policy of Louis XI.

to secure the reality of power without its semblance. Never perhaps was there a king in Europe whose manners were less kingly. His way of life was not merely unostentatious but parsimonious. He avoided show as much as possible. In appearance he was not imposing, in dress he was peculiarly slovenly, and he utterly despised the pomp of state. He treated in the most familiar manner men of the lowest birth, made his barber his chief councillor, and walked about in the company of hangmen. This familiarity with men of low rank in itself did much to alienate the nobles, but on the other hand it identified the interests of the people with those of a king who was always affable, always accessible, who took men for what they were really worth, and not for what they were made by birth and station.

III. *The Burgundian Alliance—Warwick's Intrigues.*

1. Still, England was at peace with France, and there might be hopes of a cordial amity. Nor had any open dissensions broken out among the English nobles at home. Edward summoned both the Nevills and the Woodvilles to his counsels, and they came. Questions regarding foreign alliances were freely discussed by both parties. A match was proposed between the King's sister Margaret and Charles Count of Charolois, son and heir of the Duke of Burgundy. Warwick, on the other hand, advocated a lasting peace with France, and the King so far yielded to his remonstrances as to send him over to treat with Louis upon the subject. Louis received him at Rouen with peculiar honour, and had a number of private interviews with him which were afterwards made grounds of suspicion against his loyalty. On his return he brought

Alliance with Burgundy proposed.

A.D. 1467. May.

with him ambassadors from France who were instructed to do all in their power to hinder the alliance between England and Burgundy. Louis was willing to pay the King of England a pension, and refer his claims to Normandy and Aquitaine to the decision of the Pope. But Edward received these proposals with disdain, and treated the envoys with very little courtesy. On the other hand the ambassadors of the Duke of Burgundy were received with special favour. Feasts and banquetings and disguisings were given in their honour. There was also a great display of chivalry in Smithfield. The Queen's brother, Anthony Lord Scales, had two years before sent a friendly challenge or invitation to the Count de la Roche, commonly called the Bastard of Burgundy, one of the most noted warriors of the time, to come to England and perform some feats of arms along with him. The offer was readily accepted, and though various impediments seem to have delayed its fulfilment, the Bastard had at length come to England with a train of Burgundian gentlemen, who gave similar challenges to the gentlemen of England. For several days in succession there were jousts between the Englishmen and Burgundians, and the success of the whole display was only marred by an accident at the first feat of arms between Lord Scales and his opponent, when the latter was thrown backwards off his horse, the rider, who was shortsighted, having made the animal strike its head against an iron spike projecting from Lord Scales's saddle-bow.

2. Just after this Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, died, and his son Charles, the intended husband of Edward's sister, became duke in his place. The marriage took effect in the year following, and England and Burgundy were knit together in a firm alliance, greatly to the satisfaction of the King and of the people generally, especially of the

Marriage of the King's sister Margaret with Charles of Burgundy.

London merchants who traded with the Duke's subjects in Flanders, but not at all to the satisfaction of the Earl of Warwick, who hated the duke extremely. He, however, disguised his feelings and accompanied Margaret to the seaside on her way to Flanders. But from this time, if not before, he continually plotted the humiliation of Edward, whom he himself had been the means of placing on the throne. The King had as yet no male children, and although he had two daughters, who by the modern rule of descent should have succeeded him before his brothers, the Duke of Clarence seems to have anticipated that he had some chance of the crown. Warwick encouraged this hope, and gave him his own daughter Isabel in marriage, hoping that by so doing he himself might recover that influence in the affairs of England which he had lost by the marriage of Edward. The wedding took place at Calais, where Warwick was governor, without the King's knowledge and against his will. But the King's attention was at that very time engaged by an insurrection in Yorkshire which had been carefully arranged by Warwick beforehand. It was led by one who called himself Robin of Redesdale, whose real name was Sir William Conyers. Manifestoes were published by the insurgents showing why they had taken up arms and complaining of the influence of Lord Rivers and the Queen's friends. The King proceeded northwards to meet them, but ordered also Lord Herbert, whom he had created Earl of Pembroke, to bring up forces from Wales, and sent a message to his brother and the Earl of Warwick to induce them to come to him peaceably. But the insurgents came upon the Earl of Pembroke and his Welsh levies near Banbury, at a place called Edgecote, and gained a complete victory, taking prisoners the earl and his brother, Sir Richard

A.D. 1469.

Robin of Redesdale's insurrection.

A.D. 1469.

July.

Herbert, whom they afterwards beheaded. Clarence and the Earl of Warwick came over from Calais, along with the Archbishop of York, who was Warwick's brother and had once been Edward's chancellor. But their coming was not to assist the King. On the contrary they took him prisoner near Coventry, and led him first to Warwick Castle and afterwards into Yorkshire. The insurgents at the same time took the Earl Rivers and his son Sir John Woodville prisoners, and put them to death at Coventry.

3. Thus the government was for a time completely in Warwick's hands, the King being his prisoner, and the power of the Woodvilles altogether broken. But presently Edward made his escape, or perhaps was suffered to regain his freedom, and a general pardon was afterwards proclaimed to all who had taken part in these commotions. This, however, did not prevent a renewal of disturbances early in the following year, when Sir Robert Welles, the eldest son of Lord Welles, raising the cry of 'King Henry!' gathered to his standard a great number of the commons of Lincolnshire, where he attacked the house of Sir Thomas à Borough, a knight of the royal household, and razed it to the ground. With Sir Robert Welles was associated Sir Thomas Dymock, the King's champion, who was his uncle by marriage. When the news of this insurrection reached the King he was provoked and alarmed in a way he had not been before. He was now convinced that a secret confederacy had been formed against him which any further acts of clemency would only serve to encourage, and he summoned Lord Welles, the father of Sir Robert, and Sir Thomas Dymock, to repair to him immediately. Hearing that the King's suspicions were fully roused they came up to London, and at first entered the Sanctuary at Westminster, but being assured of pardon, Lord Welles came to the King and

A.D. 1470. Insurrection of Sir Robert Welles.

wrote a letter to his son desiring him to desist from his enterprise. His son, however, did not obey, and Edward, enraged at his obstinacy, violated the promise of security he had given to the father, and ordered both Lord Welles and Sir Thomas Dymock to be beheaded.

4. It was only meeting perfidy by perfidy. As might be expected, the King's enemies were confounded. Sir Robert Welles and his confederates were desperate. He had been promised assistance from the Earl of Warwick and the Duke of Clarence; but the King had gone northwards with his army as far as the confines of Lincolnshire, and no succours were at hand. Sir Robert engaged the royal forces in the neighbourhood of Stamford; but when the King's artillery opened fire the greater part of the insurgents flung away their coats and took to flight, leaving their leader a prisoner in the hands of his enemies. The manner in which the rebels were dispersed caused the action to be spoken of as the battle of Lose-coat Field. The defeated knew that they had no mercy to expect, and fled, some of them as far as Scarborough, where several were beheaded. Sir Robert Welles was beheaded the day after the battle. Before his death he made a full confession as to the plan and motives of the insurrection, by which it appeared beyond all doubt that the intention was to have deposed King Edward and made the Duke of Clarence king.

A.D. 1470. March. Battle of Lose-coat Field.

5. But the rebellion was now paralysed. The Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick fled into Lancashire, from whence they passed by sea to Southampton, hoping there to have secured a large ship called the 'Trinity,' belonging to the Earl of Warwick. In this attempt, however, they were defeated by the Queen's brother, Lord Scales, who by the death of his father had now become Earl Rivers; for Edward had given him the

command of some ships at Southampton and he captured several vessels of Warwick's little fleet. Warwick and the Duke of Clarence escaped across the sea, while John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, was commissioned to try the prisoners taken in their ships. The result was that twenty persons were hanged, drawn, and quartered, and their heads cut off. To exhibit their quarters to public view in some conspicuous position was only one of the commonplace barbarities of the age in the punishment of treason. But by Worcester's orders a new horror was given to this practice. The head and members of each of the unfortunate men were impaled on a stake in a manner peculiarly hideous and unaccustomed. Civil war, conspiracy, and rebellion had not only hardened the hearts of men on both sides, but had brutalised the most refined. The Earl of Worcester was one of the most accomplished scholars of the time; but he was remembered after this as 'the butcher of England.'

IV. *Edward driven out, and Henry VI. restored.*

1. As for the Earl of Warwick and the Duke of Clarence, they naturally sought to take refuge in Calais, where the earl was governor. But Lord Wenlock, who had been recently appointed his lieutenant, opposed their landing and turned the guns of the fortress against them. The Duchess of Clarence, who accompanied her husband, gave birth to a son on board ship while they were lying at anchor before the town, and with great difficulty Lord Wenlock was induced to send her two flagons of wine for her comfort; but on no account would he suffer them to approach the harbour. So that in the end the duke and earl were obliged to turn aside and seek in the French king's dominions an asylum that was denied them everywhere else.

2. Louis XI., we may be sure, was not sorry to have an opportunity of giving protection and comfort to Edward's enemies. Margaret of Anjou was at that very time living in his dominions; and if by any means her cause and that of the two English noblemen could be made the same, Edward would certainly have occasion to repent his want of cordiality towards the French king. But what chance could there be of an alliance between those who had been such bitter enemies? The Earl of Warwick had been the principal cause of the deposition and captivity of King Henry; and even if Margaret could mitigate her resentment on this account, she held it very questionable policy to forgive so notorious an offender. But Warwick was now most anxious to be reconciled to her; he had offended King Edward beyond hope of pardon, and unless he could obtain the friendship of Margaret he was undone for ever. The French king offered himself a willing mediator, and through his intercession a reconciliation was at last accomplished. It was agreed that the Earl of Warwick should lead an expedition into England to recover the throne for King Henry, and that if it proved successful, Warwick's second daughter Anne was to be married to Henry's son, the Prince of Wales. The King of France, for his part, engaged to lend every assistance to the attempt, and he accordingly furnished a fleet to protect the earl in crossing against the Duke of Burgundy.

Louis promotes a reconciliation between Margaret of Anjou and Warwick.

3. The earl and his company accordingly sailed from Harfleur and landed safely in the west of England. The Duke of Clarence came along with him; and the whole expedition disembarked in the ports of Plymouth and Dartmouth. King Edward seems to have been lulled into a sense of false security which is altogether inexplicable. He had already had sufficient

Sept. 13.

experience of the turbulent character of Warwick and the inconstancy of his brother Clarence. Yet he actually allowed himself to be taken by surprise, believing himself secure in the affections of his people generally, and paid no attention to the warnings of his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy, who, from dread and dislike of Warwick even more than from love of Edward, endeavoured by repeated messages to put him on his guard. He was even indiscreet enough, at a time when the landing of Clarence and Warwick was very generally expected, to entrust the command of forces for the protection of the kingdom to the Marquis of Montague, Warwick's brother, who, besides his relationship to the principal leader of the invasion, had a secret grudge of his own against Edward, to induce him to turn traitor. For this marquis, formerly simple Lord Montague, had been, as we have already mentioned, created by Edward Earl of Northumberland in reward for the victory of Hexham ; but the King, finding that the people in the North were much devoted to Henry Percy, son of that Earl of Northumberland who was slain at Towton, was induced to reverse the attainder and restore him to his father's dignity. Montague was accordingly prevailed on to surrender the earldom and to accept the higher rank of marquis for his compliance. But this was a mere empty honour, not accompanied by a suitable provision in lands to maintain the increased dignity; so he openly told the men whom he had assembled in King Edward's name that the King had given him but 'a pie's nest' to support his state, and that he would therefore take the part of his brother the Earl of Warwick in opposition to King Edward.

Warwick and Clarence invade England.

4. Before the landing of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick, Edward had been drawn into the north to put down some commotions raised by Warwick's brother-in-

law Lord Fitzhugh, who on his approach fled into Scotland. He had gone as far as York, where, finding it needless to pursue the enemy, he rested for a while, when he received the news of the invasion. Even then he would not at first believe his danger, and wrote to the Duke of Burgundy to have his fleet ready to prevent their escape by sea, for on land he knew how to deal with them. But shortly afterwards he learned to his dismay that Montague's soldiers were crying 'God bless King Henry!' Very few men gathered about his standard in Yorkshire, and he was warned that there was now little security for him except in flight. Accompanied by a small body of men he rode through the night to Lynn. He had a few ships riding at anchor in the Wash not far off, but one lay in the harbour. Availing himself of this and two Dutch merchant ships he embarked with his brother the Duke of Gloucester, his brother-in-law Rivers, his chamberlain Lord Hastings, and about 800 followers. The little company were without clothes except what they had upon their backs; but no time was to be lost and they set sail for Holland. Edward landed at Alkmaar and proceeded to the Hague, where he threw himself upon the protection of the Duke of Burgundy.

Edward takes flight

Oct. 3. and embarks for Holland.

5. The Earl of Warwick was now master of the kingdom. King Henry was released from the Tower, and was once more recognised as king. The Earl of Worcester, whose hideous executions at Southampton were fresh in people's memory, was arraigned of treason at Whitehall, condemned, and executed upon Tower Hill. Parliament was then assembled to ratify the arrangements that had been made in France. An act was passed entailing the crown on the male issue of King Henry, and in default of such issue on the Duke of Clarence and the heirs of his body. The duke and Warwick were

appointed protectors of the kingdom during the minority of Edward Prince of Wales. The former was recognised as heir to his father the late Duke of York; while the latter was appointed to a number of high offices of state some of which he had held before.

V. *Return of King Edward.*

1. But in less than six months after being driven from his kingdom Edward was enabled to return to it by the private assistance of his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy. He embarked at Flushing on March 2, and landed on the 14th at Ravenspur, where Henry IV. had disembarked when he came to dethrone King Richard. His circumstances in other respects were so similar to those of Henry, that he adopted precisely the same line of policy. To induce the people of Yorkshire to withdraw their opposition to him, he professed that he came only to seek his rightful inheritance, the dukedom of York. He disclaimed any intention of removing King Henry, and being admitted into the city of York he solemnly abjured all pretensions to the crown. But as he passed southwards numbers came to his standard, and in direct violation of his oath he issued proclamations as king. No attempt was made to resist his progress before he reached the capital. He was joined near Coventry by his brother Clarence, who for a long time had been secretly anxious for a reconciliation, or at least had expressed to secret agents his willingness to abandon Warwick's party on a favourable opportunity. Edward advanced to London, and was readily admitted by the citizens, many of whom were his creditors. He then went out to meet his opponents, Warwick and Montague, at Barnet, carrying with him the unhappy King, Henry VI., once more a captive in his hands.

A.D. 1471. March 14.

2. Edward occupied the town of Barnet on the evening of April 13. The enemy were encamped to the north. During the night Edward drew up his forces opposite to them, intending to give them battle at daybreak. That morning was Easter Sunday. About 4 o'clock the day began to dawn, but the whole scene was obscured by a dense fog, which prevented Edward from discovering that he had mistaken during the darkness the precise position of the enemy. At 5 o'clock, however, the fighting commenced. Edward's forces on the left were very much outflanked by those of the Earl of Warwick, and after some time began to give way. A number of Edward's men fled the field and spread news in Barnet and on the road to London that the day was lost. The Earl's right wing closed upon the retreating combatants and came opposite their own left wing commanded by the Earl of Oxford. But owing to the fog that still prevailed they did not know their own men, and Oxford's badge, a star with streams, was mistaken for the 'sun of York.' Warwick's men accordingly shot at Oxford's, and the latter cried out 'Treason!' and fled. At length after six hours' fighting the Earl of Warwick and his brother Montague were slain, and King Edward's party were triumphant. But the slaughter on both sides was very heavy; for the action being a critical one for King Edward, he forbore to order his soldiers to spare the common people in the ranks of his antagonists, which had been his usual practice in these wars.

A.D. 1471.

Battle of Barnet, April 14.

3. The Earl of Warwick is known in history by the name of Warwick 'the King-maker.' The title is truly significant of his power, which had been twice most signally shown in the setting up of one king and the deposition of another. He was the last great feudal nobleman who ever made himself dangerous to a reigning king. His policy throughout appears to have been

selfish and treacherous, and his removal was an unquestionable blessing to his country.

4. Edward now entered London in triumph, and sent back King Henry a prisoner to the Tower. But he was immediately compelled to leave the city in order to meet a new enemy. For Queen Margaret, who had not yet come over from France to join her husband in his prosperity, at length landed with a body of Frenchmen at Weymouth on the very day her great ally was defeated and slain at Barnet. Next day she proceeded to Cerne Abbey, where she was visited by the Duke of Somerset and other lords of her party, who assured her that, notwithstanding the reverse sustained by their side, she would still be able to raise a power, especially in the western counties where she had landed. By their advice she accordingly proceeded, with her son the prince, to Exeter. The people of Cornwall and Devon rose to do her service, and in a very few days she again moved eastward by Glastonbury to Bath. Here learning that Edward was approaching with his army, she turned aside to Bristol, and afterwards bent her course northward by Gloucester, where the gates were shut against her, and after a fatiguing day's march of thirty-six miles, arrived at Tewkesbury. That same evening King Edward passed Cheltenham and lodged within three miles of them. Next morning, May 4, he gave them battle.

Margaret lands in England.

May 4.

5. In this action the Lancastrians were utterly defeated. Queen Margaret was taken prisoner. Her son Edward by some accounts was slain on the field; according to others he was murdered after the battle in the presence of King Edward himself. The tradition in a later age was that he was murdered by Richard Duke of Gloucester; but the fact may be that when Richard in after years horrified the

Battle of Tewkesbury.

world by a crime still more revolting, a number of earlier deeds of violence were attributed to him of which he was really guiltless. Richard, although he had led the van of Edward's army at Barnet, was at this time only in his nineteenth year; and though doubtless he was receiving an education in ferocity from the unnatural character of the wars in which he was engaged, it may perhaps be questioned whether the writers of the next age were right in thinking he had begun his career of violence so early. King Edward's own conduct at this time was cruel and unscrupulous enough. He himself, sword in hand, pursued a number of the defeated party into the abbey church of Tewkesbury. A priest, bearing the host in his hand, came out to meet him at the door, and obtained from him a promise that he would spare the lives of the Duke of Somerset and fourteen other persons who had sought refuge there. But in violation of this pledge they were all beheaded two days later.

6. The utmost that can be said to extenuate Edward's perfidy on this and other occasions is that he had recourse to it at the most critical period in his fortunes, when beset with difficulties at every turn. His natural disposition does not appear to have been cruel; but at Barnet he gave no quarter, feeling that all was lost for him if he did not deal that day a decisive blow against the enemy. He was victorious, yet he was immediately called to contend with a new enemy in the west; and now while he was away in Gloucestershire one of Warwick's sea-captains named the Bastard Falconbridge landed in Kent to make another diversion in favour of King Henry. In Kent he procured a certain number of followers, and coming up to London endeavoured to force an entrance into the city with the view of liberating Henry from the Tower. But having set

The Bastard Falconbridge makes an attempt in Henry's favour. A.D. 1471.

Aldgate and London Bridge on fire he exasperated the citizens, so that they made a more resolute resistance than they would otherwise have done, and he found it necessary to give up the attempt.

7. King Edward returned with his army to London on May 21. He was received in triumph by the mayor and citizens, who went out to meet him between Shoreditch and Islington; and on the highway before he entered the city he made knights of a number of the aldermen. Three days later he marched into Kent in pursuit of the Bastard Falconbridge. But during his brief stay in London an event occurred which throws the deepest shadow of suspicion upon Edward's conduct. On the very night of his arrival King Henry died in his prison within the Tower. His body was exhibited at St. Paul's the following day, and it was given out that his death had been owing to 'pure displeasure and melancholy.' But the coincidence of the event with Edward's arrival in the capital, and the too obvious advantage to the King of getting rid of a rival whose adherents gave him so much trouble, convinced the world at large that this was only a pretence. Henry had now no son to avenge his death or to claim succession to his kingdom; and from what we have already seen of Edward there is very little reason to doubt that he caused the poor feeble monarch to be secretly assassinated. The suspicion, indeed, is hinted even by a writer friendly to the King, who wrote within the security of a monastery. From this time, at all events, Edward was no longer troubled with rebellions in favour of the House of Lancaster.

May 21.

Suspicious death of Henry VI.

8. The sudden and extraordinary changes of fortune experienced by the two rival kings during those unhappy commotions were shared by their adherents among the nobility, some

Changes of fortune during the Wars of the Roses.

of whom during the adverse circumstances of their party suffered the most severe distress and poverty. Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, who, though he had married a sister of Edward IV., took part with the House of Lancaster, was seen at one time in the Low Countries bare-footed and bare-legged, begging his bread from door to door, till he was recognised and pensioned by the Duke of Burgundy. Queen Elizabeth Woodville, when her husband was driven into exile, was obliged to take refuge in the Sanctuary at Westminster, where she gavé birth to her eldest son, afterwards Edward V. As for Margaret of Anjou, she remained a prisoner in England after the battle of Tewkesbury until, on Edward making peace with France in 1475, she was ransomed by Louis XI. and returned to her own country.

VI. *War with France.*

1. Civil dissensions being now appeased, Edward was easily induced to combine with Charles of Burgundy against Louis. The proposal to make war on France met with general approbation from his subjects, supplies were voted for the purpose by Parliament and by the clergy in convocation, and to crown all, large sums were subscribed by the wealthy at the King's particular request. An unprecedented treasure was thus accumulated, but the means employed to raise it were not greatly relished. The subscriptions of the wealthy were called *benevolences*, being regarded as voluntary donations expressive of the goodwill and patriotism of those contributing. But from the influence brought to bear upon the donors they were felt to be of the nature of extortion; for Edward himself, in many cases, solicited contributions personally. Though nominally a free gift, no tax was ever felt more oppressive;

'Benevolences.'

and the evil example set by Edward was unfortunately followed by several of his successors.

2. In the summer of 1475 Edward crossed the sea with a magnificent army. Before embarking, he sent Garter king of arms to Louis to require him to deliver up the kingdom of France to him as his lawful inheritance. Another king of France would doubtless have treated with contempt this extravagant claim which the English still continued to reassert. But Louis had no thought of resisting by force of arms. The invading army was strong, and if the Duke of Burgundy had brought the amount of aid that might have been expected, it would have been quite within the power of the allies to have dealt a very severe blow against France. The duke, however, had allowed himself to be occupied too long with an expedition into Germany, where he laid siege to Neuss near Düsseldorf, and at his coming he failed to give Edward satisfaction. Of this Louis took advantage. He told Garter he was well aware that the King of England did not mean to invade France on his own account, and that it was apparent the Duke of Burgundy could not give him much assistance; then dismissing the herald with a handsome present, he promised him a still more valuable reward if he could prevail upon his master to consent to peace.

Edward invades France.

3. Edward was greatly flattered with the thought that he had so soon inspired his enemy with a desire to treat, and the wily King of France omitted no art to deepen the impression. No sooner, therefore, had the English king set foot upon the Continent than Louis sent to him to know if he was disposed to come to terms, suggesting at the same time that the Duke of Burgundy had been using Edward for his own ends, and that the year was so far advanced that the invaders could not hope to make much progress before

Louis offers to treat.

the winter. Negotiations were accordingly opened, and though the English began, as usual, with their formal demand of the whole realm of France, they gradually abated their pretensions. First they lowered their demands to the restitution of Normandy and Guienne. But Louis had fully resolved beforehand to consent to no cession of territory; and in the end the English were satisfied with a seven years' truce and the payment of a large yearly pension by France to England. This payment they were free to regard as an acknowledgment of Edward's sovereignty over France, while Louis and his friends took a different view of it. They called it a pension; the English a tribute. A liberal distribution of pensions was also made by Louis to the chief councillors of the King of England for their services in promoting the peace.

A seven years' truce arranged.

4. At the same time provisions were made in the treaty which gave hope that it might one day be turned into a lasting peace; for it was arranged that the Dauphin Charles should marry Edward's eldest daughter Elizabeth as soon as the parties were of sufficient age.

5. Matters being thus settled, an interview took place between the two kings at Pequigny on the Somme. A bridge was thrown across the river with a wooden grating in the middle, through which they shook hands. This arrangement had been made by the suspicious Louis to prevent the possibility of treachery; mindful of the fate of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, he allowed no wicket within the barrier. But after swearing to observe the treaty on both sides, the two kings entered into conversation with the utmost freedom and familiarity; insomuch that Louis, in an unguarded moment, half invited the other to come and see him at Paris. The invitation was indeed thrown out in the way of jest, with some raillery about Edward's de-

Interview at Pequigny.

votion to the fair sex, and the beautiful ladies who would be sure to captivate him in France; but Edward, to the other's no little annoyance, seemed not at all disinclined to accept it seriously. Louis, however, took care not to give him an opportunity; and in private he afterwards expressed an opinion to Commines that the kings of England had been often enough in Paris and in Normandy already. He had great desire to preserve the friendship of Edward, but much preferred that he should keep on his own side of the water.

VII. *France and Burgundy.*

1. Before proceeding further with the story of English events it will now be advisable that we should say something of the rivalry between the French king and his powerful vassal, Charles Duke of Burgundy. We have already seen the weakness to which the French monarchy was reduced at the beginning of the reign of Louis XI. The Burgundian court, on the other hand, although that of a feudal inferior, was the most wealthy and magnificent in all Europe. For some time also the Duke of Burgundy maintained the advantage he had gained over his sovereign in the war of the Public Weal. Louis formed a league against him with the citizens of Liége, but Charles contrived to seize his person and shut him up in the castle of Peronne until he made him atone for his intrigues by a considerable cession of territory. The people of Liége were at this time engaged in a second revolt against their bishop (who was their temporal ruler as well), although they had been already severely punished for their insubordination by Charles, by the forfeiture of all their ancient chartered rights and the demolition of the walls of the town. They would naturally have looked for assistance from the King of France; but Louis had

fallen so completely into the power of Charles, that to gain his liberty he disowned his allies and offered to come with the Duke of Burgundy to Liége, where he witnessed with apparent satisfaction the most terrible vengeance taken on his own supporters. The city was completely sacked, and the inhabitants were massacred even in the churches by a brutal soldiery. After this, Louis endeavoured, by supporting the Earl of Warwick, to deprive Charles of his ally the King of England,—a design which, as we have seen, gave much greater anxiety to the Duke of Burgundy than it did to Edward himself, who could not be awakened to his danger until it was too late. At length, owing to the French king's repeated breaches of faith, Charles took it upon him to declare his independence of the French crown and made a treaty with the Emperor Frederic III., who engaged to bestow upon him the title of king, instead of duke, of Burgundy, on condition that he would give his daughter Mary in marriage to the Emperor's son Maximilian. To conclude this matter Charles repaired to a diet at Treves in 1473, but the Emperor receded from his part of the engagement and retired from Treves when everything was ready for Charles's coronation. In resentment of this affront Charles next year invaded Germany and laid siege to Neuss—an operation which, as already mentioned, prevented him from fulfilling punctually his engagements with England in the war which they had agreed to undertake together against France.

Massacre of Liége.

Charles the Bold and the Emperor.

2. It was always the policy of Louis to raise up enemies for Charles without, if possible, allowing his own hand to be seen in the business. By his subtle and mysterious diplomacy Charles was involved in wars with the Swiss, and in 1476 he sustained a great defeat at Granson on the borders of Lake Neufcha-

A.D. 1476.

tel, which was followed by another equally disastrous at Morat. Here another enemy had taken part against him, René II., Duke of Lorraine, whom he had deprived of the possession of his duchy. The people of Lorraine now expelled the Burgundian garrisons, and the retreat of Charles seemed almost hopelessly cut off. Nevertheless, even in the midst of winter, Charles penetrated into Lorraine and compelled the duke to return in haste to defend his capital, Nancy. A short and decisive battle took place under the walls of the town. The Burgundians were put to flight and Charles himself was slain. By his last campaigns he more especially merited the title by which he is known in history. His cavalry and artillery laboured under the greatest disadvantages among the Swiss mountains, and he lost two great battles by a disregard of common prudence. He is commonly spoken of in English as Charles the Bold, but the French still more truly name him Charles the Rash.

A.D. 1477, Jan. 5.

VIII. *Fate of Clarence—The Scotch War—Death of Edward.*

1. It might have been supposed that the House of York was now securely seated upon the throne; and, so far as regarded Edward himself, nothing more occurred to disturb his possession. But the family divisions which had already sprung up pursued that house ultimately to its ruin. The breach between the King and his brother Clarence, it soon appeared, was only superficially healed over. A quarrel also took place between Clarence and his other brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester. After the death of Edward Prince of Wales, the son of King Henry, at Tewkesbury, his widow Anne, who, it will be remembered was a daughter of Warwick the King-maker,

Quarrel between the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester.

was sought by Gloucester in marriage; but Clarence, who had married her elder sister, opposed his suit and attempted to conceal her. Richard, however, discovered her in London in the disguise of a cook-maid, and had her removed to the Sanctuary of St. Martin's. When Clarence was no longer able to prevent the match, he still refused to divide with his brother the inheritance of their father-in-law the Earl of Warwick. By the mediation of Edward the matter was at length settled, and an act was passed in Parliament making a division of Warwick's lands between the royal brothers, with very little consideration for the rights of his surviving countess.

Clarence out of favour again,

2. But in the course of a few years symptoms of the old ill-will broke out between the Duke of Clarence and Edward himself. On the death of Charles Duke of Burgundy, Clarence, who was then a widower, was desirous to marry his daughter and heiress Mary. Such a match would have made him a powerful continental prince, and his suit was favoured by his sister Margaret, the widow of the duke; but Edward threw every obstacle in the way. This, in addition to some former injuries, real or supposed, embittered Clarence against his brother in a way he did not care to conceal. At last, some gentlemen of his household having been accused of sorcery, condemned, and executed, Clarence, before the King's council, protested his belief in their innocence. This step was treated by the King as dangerous to the administration of justice, and he caused his brother to be arrested and committed to the Tower.

A.D. 1478. impeached of treason,

3. When Parliament met in the beginning of the year 1478, Clarence was impeached of treason by his own brother before the House of Peers. No other accuser stepped forward but the King himself; but the whole of his past intrigues and

rebellions were now brought up against him. It was related in the indictment how he had been already pardoned the most serious offences, and yet had conspired again against his brother. It was set forth also how at one time, for the gratification of his ambition, he had not hesitated to cast a stigma upon his own mother, declaring his brother Edward illegitimate and himself the true heir of his father. With these a number of other circumstances were related, all tending to show that he made it still his aim to supplant King Edward. The lords found Clarence guilty and he was condemned to death. Execution of the sentence was, however, delayed for several days, until the Speaker of the House of Commons, coming to the bar of the Lords, desired that the matter might be brought to a conclusion. Shortly afterwards the duke was put to death within the Tower in a manner so very secret that, although the day was known, the kind of death he suffered was a matter of uncertainty. A singular report, however, got abroad that he had been drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine.

Feb. 7.

and put to death, Feb. 18.

4. Perhaps the very secrecy of the execution, if such it might be called, was owing to Edward's reluctance to carry out the sentence; for there is reason to believe, after all, that the whole proceedings were painful to him. After the death of Clarence, it is said, when any man besought the King for the pardon of an offender, he would exclaim, 'O unfortunate brother, that no man would ask pardon for thee!' But whatever the effect on Edward's peace of mind, the removal of Clarence contributed to the quiet of his kingdom. For he had been, beyond all question, factious and turbulent in the extreme. Yet he had some qualities which won him the favour of the multitude and made him a popular idol. His popularity, too, was all the more dangerous to

Edward because, according to an act of Parliament passed during the restoration of Henry VI., Clarence ought to have been the legitimate king after the death of Edward Prince of Wales. Of this act of Parliament, of course, Edward did not recognise the authority; but he felt it necessary now to get his Parliament to repeal it.

5. There is little else that is memorable in Edward's reign except a war with Scotland that broke out at the close of it. To strengthen his family upon the throne, Edward had arranged marriages for most of his children with foreign princes, and while his eldest daughter Elizabeth was contracted by treaty to the dauphin, Cecily, the third, was engaged to Prince James, the eldest son of James III. of Scotland. In consideration of this latter match Edward had agreed to give with his daughter a dower of 20,000 marks, of which three instalments had already been paid in advance, though the parties had not yet arrived at a marriageable age. Some misunderstanding, however, broke out between the two kings, partly, as it is supposed, through the intrigues of Louis XI., who, as the time drew near when the dauphin ought to have claimed his bride, showed a great disposition to evade his own obligations to England. But whatever may have been the exact cause, Edward and James each accused the other of unfair dealing, and James in the spring of 1480 actually marched an army across the Borders into Northumberland.

James III. invades England, A.D. 1480.

6. The King of England, for his part, commissioned his brother Richard Duke of Gloucester to lead his forces against the invader. At the same time the domestic state of Scotland gave Edward great advantages. James III. was a king distinguished for a love of art and science, which his nobles held in great

May 12.

contempt. His court was the resort of musicians and architects, by whose advice he was supposed to be governed in matters affecting the weal of his kingdom. His own brothers were disaffected to him. One of them, the Earl of Mar, is said to have been put to death by his orders. The other, Alexander Duke of Albany, escaped to France, but was invited over to England by Edward, with whom he entered into treaty for assistance to make himself King of Scotland, pretending that his brother was illegitimate. He engaged, on obtaining his kingdom, to deliver up Berwick to the English, and he went with the Duke of Gloucester to lay siege to that town, which surrendered with very little resistance. James, meanwhile, was advancing at the head of his forces to make a new inroad on the English Border; but having arrived at Lauder, a conference was held in the church by his discontented lords, who in the end seized seven of the detested favourites and hanged them over the bridge. The Scotch army was then disbanded and the King conveyed back to Edinburgh by the nobles, who extorted from him a full pardon for what they had done. Albany and Gloucester then marched on to Edinburgh, and were received within the city as friends.

A.D. 1482, June 11.

The Scotch lords seize and put to death the King's favourites.

Albany and Gloucester march to Edinburgh.

7. But Albany was well aware that his title to the crown of Scotland would not be supported within the realm itself. A compromise was therefore arranged, and a peace was concluded between all parties. The sums advanced by Edward for his daughter's dower were repaid, and Berwick was given up to England. Albany, however, very soon afterwards renewed his intrigues with Edward; as a consequence of which he was attainted by the Parliament of Scotland.

8. As for Edward, he had scarcely composed this dispute with Scotland when he met with a cruel mortification at the hands of Louis XI. of France. It is evident that that wily monarch had never really intended the match between the dauphin and the Princess Elizabeth to take effect. Edward, on the other hand, had been induced by the prospect of this alliance to make peace with Louis on more easy terms, perhaps, than he might otherwise have granted. Time passed away, however, and Louis took no steps to bring the matter to a conclusion, till at last a great opportunity presented itself of violating his engagement openly. Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, had been defeated and slain at Nancy in 1477. He left an only daughter, Mary, to inherit his rich dominions, which included not only Burgundy but a great part of the Low Countries. Her territories were invaded by Louis, but she married Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederick III., who, though the poorest prince of Europe, was a very good soldier and recovered for her several places that had submitted to the French. The Duchess Mary, however, was unexpectedly cut off in March 1482 by a fall from her horse. She left two young children, Philip and Margaret, of whom the former was heir to the duchy; but their father Maximilian was despised by the Flemings and had no means of making his authority respected. The men of Ghent, who were secretly encouraged by Louis, took possession of his children and compelled him to govern as they pleased; till in the end he was driven to conclude with the French king a treaty at Arras by which Margaret was to be married to the dauphin and to have as her dower some of the most valuable lands in Burgundy, taken from the inheritance of her brother Philip.

Louis XI. breaks faith with Edward.

9. This treaty was concluded on December 23, 1482.

The mortification it gave to Edward was extreme, and French writers say that he died of the disappointment. Whether that be the case or not, he did not survive it four months; for he died on April 9, 1483. With many great defects in his character, he was a king more in sympathy with his people than any sovereign that had been seen in England since the days of Edward III. Handsome in person and affable in manner, he was always easy to be approached. He was a great favourite with the citizens of London, and rather too much so with their wives. Careless and self-indulgent, he was greatly given to licentiousness, and forgot the affairs of his kingdom in pursuing his own pleasures. He was a good soldier but a bad general, a jovial companion but a poor statesman. His personal influence with his subjects was higher perhaps than that of any of his predecessors; but he cannot be regarded as by any means a great king.

Death of Edward.

CHAPTER IX.

EDWARD V.

1. EDWARD, the son and heir of the deceased king, was at Ludlow on the borders of Wales when his father died. He had been sent thither as Prince of Wales to hold a court and keep the country in good order; for which purpose a council had been assigned to him consisting originally of his uncles the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, his maternal uncle Anthony Earl Rivers, Lord Hastings, and several others. But the Duke of Clarence was dead, the Duke of Gloucester in the North, and Lord Hastings in London; so that when young Edward, who

was only in his thirteenth year, received the news of his own accession to the throne, he was surrounded principally by his mother's relations.

2. Now it was most unfortunate for the young King himself that both his mother and her kinsfolk were looked upon with dislike and jealousy by the old nobility. The Woodvilles had always been regarded as upstarts, but under the reign of the late king no loyal subject could say anything against them. The Council in London, however, were of opinion that it would be advisable to remove the new King entirely from the influence of his maternal relatives; and though the Queen Dowager desired that he should be brought up to London with as large an escort as possible, the lords could not be persuaded to sanction a stronger retinue than was needed for his personal safety. Lord Hastings, who was governor of Calais, took alarm, and talked of departing immediately across the sea. The Queen's friends were obliged to give assurances that no large force should come up; and orders were sent down to Ludlow that the company should on no account exceed 2,000 horse.

The old nobility jealous of the Woodvilles.

3. On his deathbed the late king had bequeathed the care of the young prince and his kingdom more especially to his brother Richard Duke of Gloucester. When, therefore, tidings of Edward's death were sent into the North, Richard at once set out for London. He reached Northampton on April 29, and found that the young King had been there that day before him and had passed on to Stony Stratford, ten miles further on. He was met, however, by the young King's uncle and half-brother, the Earl Rivers and Lord Richard Grey, who had ridden back to pay their respects to him in Edward's name. Henry Duke of Buckingham also joined the party. He, it is said, had been already in communication with Glou-

cester. With apparent cordiality all sat down together to supper; but after the retirement of Rivers and Grey the two dukes held a consultation, the result of which was that early next morning they caused their guests to be arrested, and pushed on to Stony Stratford before the royal party had time to get away. They obtained an audience of the young King, and in his presence accused his uncle Rivers and his two half-brothers, the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Richard Grey, of a design to usurp the government and oppress the old nobility. Dorset, it seems, who was Constable of the Tower, had taken supplies of arms and money out of that fortress and fitted out a small fleet; while Rivers and Lord Richard Grey had shown a most suspicious haste in bringing young Edward up to London.

Arrest of Rivers and Grey.

4. The poor lad could not believe these accusations, and burst into tears on hearing them. The two dukes, however, caused Rivers and Grey, with two other gentlemen of his household, to be sent in custody into Yorkshire, where, after being confined for nearly two months in different places, they were ultimately beheaded at Pomfret. Meanwhile the young King continued his journey to London in the company of his uncle Gloucester and the Duke of Buckingham. Alarm had been at first created in the city by the news of the arrests made at Northampton, but the fact became known that large quantities of armour and weapons were found among the baggage of Rivers and the King's attendants; and this discovery produced an impression that their imprisonment was perfectly justified. The mayor and citizens accordingly met the young King and his uncle at Hornsea Park and conducted him into the city. They entered it on May 4, a day that had been originally set apart for Edward's coronation. That ceremony was now deferred till June 22.

Meanwhile the Duke of Gloucester was declared Protector of the young King and his kingdom, and a parliament was summoned to assemble three days after the coronation.

The Duke of Gloucester named Protector.

5. But the Queen Mother, Elizabeth Woodville, on hearing that her brother and her son had been arrested at Northampton, had quitted Westminster Palace and gone into the adjoining Sanctuary. Here Rotherham, Archbishop of York, who had been lord chancellor at the death of Edward IV., brought her the Great Seal of England as a guarantee that nothing should be done against the interest of her son. This act was a grave official misdemeanour, which he had soon cause to repent; for the office of chancellor was taken from him, and a censure was passed upon him by the Council for letting the Seal go out of his custody. The Queen's influence, which had been so great during the reign of her husband, was now completely at an end, and the old nobility rejoiced at having got rid of her ascendancy—a revolution, as Lord Hastings triumphantly remarked, that had cost no more blood than a cut finger.

The Queen Dowager takes Sanctuary.

6. Hastings, indeed, had been a principal cause of this change; but notwithstanding his open boast he seems very soon to have repented it and held meetings with the Queen's friends at St. Paul's to consider how to get the King out of Richard's power. Richard at the same time held meetings with his supporters at Crosby's Place in Bishopsgate Street, where he then resided. At last at a council held within the Tower, he caused Hastings suddenly to be arrested and immediately after beheaded on Tower Green. Morton Bishop of Ely, and Archbishop Rotherham were also placed in confinement. The Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham then sent for the principal citizens, and appearing before them in rusty armour which they had

Hastings beheaded.

suddenly put on, explained that they had only that morning heard of a conspiracy formed against them by Hastings and others, who would have killed the Protector and taken the government into their own hands.

7. This sudden execution of one who, to outward appearance, had been all along most friendly to the two dukes against whom he was said to have conspired, occasioned general astonishment. The act was certainly quite illegal, and it is hard to see how it could have been necessary even in self-defence. Read by the light of subsequent events it seems to admit only of one interpretation—that Richard was at this time plotting his own elevation to the throne, and, finding that Hastings could not be relied on to second his designs, had determined to remove him. But an impression does seem to have been conveyed, which is stated as a simple fact in a history written many years after, that Richard on this occasion only anticipated violence by equally high-handed measures of his own. The view, however, which has obtained most general currency is derived from a very graphic account of the scene in the council chamber written by Sir Thomas More, who unquestionably obtained his information from Cardinal Morton, at that time Bishop of Ely, one of the persons then arrested by the Protector. According to this narrative the blow which fell upon Hastings altogether took him by surprise. The story is, in brief, as follows.

8. The Protector made his appearance in the council chamber about nine o'clock in the morning. His manner was gracious. He blamed his own laziness for not coming earlier, and turning to Morton Bishop of Ely, said, 'My lord, you have very good strawberries in your garden at Holborn; I pray you let us have a mess of them.' After this, having opened the business of the council and engaged the lords in con-

The scene at the Council in the Tower.

versation he took leave of them for a time. Between ten and eleven o'clock he returned. His manner was altogether altered, and as he took his seat he frowned on the assembly and bit his lips. After a pause he asked what punishment they deserved who had conspired against the life of one so nearly related to the King as himself, and entrusted with the government of the kingdom. The council was confounded, but Hastings, presuming on his familiarity with the Protector, said they deserved the punishment of traitors. 'That sorceress my brother's wife,' exclaimed Richard, 'and others with her, see how they have wasted my body by their sorcery and witchcraft!' And as he spoke he bared his left arm and showed it to the council, shrunk and withered, as it always had been. He added that one of the accomplices of the Queen Dowager in this business was Jane Shore, who had been one of the mistresses of the late king her husband, and since his death had become the mistress of Hastings.

9. The accusation against the Queen Dowager, we are told, was not at all displeasing to Hastings, who regarded her with deadly hatred; but when the Protector mentioned the name of Shore's wife he felt very differently. He, however, ventured to reply 'Certainly, my lords, if they have done so heinously, they are worthy of heinous punishment.' 'What,' exclaimed Richard, 'dost thou serve me with ifs and ands? I tell thee they have done it, and that I will make good on thy body, traitor!' On this he struck his fist upon the council table with great force. Armed men rushed in, crying 'Treason!' Hastings and some others, including Morton, were arrested, and Lord Stanley had a blow aimed at his head with a poleaxe. Richard then bade Hastings instantly prepare for death, swearing by St. Paul that he would not dine till he had seen his head off. He accordingly made his confession to the first priest that could be found. A log of timber intended

for some repairs in the Tower served the purpose of a block, and before noon his head was severed from his body.

10. In what manner Jane Shore had incurred the Protector's displeasure it is difficult to understand. Richard accused her of witchcraft and of being an accomplice of Hastings in a scheme for his destruction; on which charges he sent her to prison and stripped her of almost all her property. After a time, however, he handed her over to the Bishop of London to inflict spiritual punishment upon her as an unchaste woman, and she was compelled to do open penance one Sunday, going through the streets in her kirtle with a taper in her hand. The exhibition, however, excited the compassion of the spectators, who looked upon her punishment as due only to malice and not to any real desire on Richard's part to promote public morality.

11. Three days before the execution of Hastings the Protector had written to the city of York, desiring a force to be sent up immediately to London to counteract the designs of the Queen Dowager and her friends, whom he accused of conspiring against him and Buckingham, and attempting the ruin of the old nobility. Some hasty levies arrived in consequence in the course of a week or ten days, and were mustered in Moorfields. Orders were also sent into the North for the execution of Rivers, Lord Richard Grey, and two other gentlemen who had been arrested in accompanying the King up to London. Meanwhile Richard persuaded the council that his nephew Richard Duke of York, who was with the Queen his mother in Sanctuary, should be sent for to take up his residence with the King his brother. A deputation, headed by Cardinal Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, was accordingly sent to the Queen, and she delivered the lad into their hands. A letter written a few days after says that he was received by Richard at

the Star Chamber door 'with many loving words.' He was conducted by the Cardinal to the Tower and was treated with all the honour that became his birth. But neither he nor the King his brother ever left the Tower again.

Richard Duke of York delivered to the Protector.

12. On Sunday, June 22, the citizens of London were astonished by a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross, a little open-air pulpit which stood at the north-east corner of St. Paul's Churchyard. Here preachers of distinction often addressed the people on public questions; but the boldness of the preacher on this occasion was quite unprecedented. He was a man of considerable reputation, by name Dr. Shaw. His text was taken from the Book of Wisdom iv. 3—'Bastard slips shall not take deep root,'—and the whole line of his argument was to show that the children of King Edward IV. were illegitimate. From this it was inferred that the true right to the crown was in the person of Richard Duke of Gloucester, who, having arranged to be present during the discourse, was made the object of a special compliment. The people, however, listened in mute astonishment, and the preacher seems to have gained little credit for an act which was clearly that of a sycophant.

Dr. Shaw's sermon.

13. Nevertheless, on the Tuesday following, at a meeting of the common council of the city of London in the Guildhall, a message was received from the Protector through the medium of the Duke of Buckingham and other lords, as to the claim advanced by him to the crown. Buckingham, who spoke with remarkable ability, entered into a statement from which he drew the conclusion that the title of the Duke of Gloucester was preferable to that of his nephew Edward. And although we are told by a city chronicler that the matter of his address was not so much admired as the eloquence with which it was delivered, the mayor and

June 24.

aldermen certainly proceeded to act upon the information thus given them.

14. A Parliament had been summoned to meet on the following day, and it is certain that a meeting of lords and commons actually took place, though, owing to some informality it was not afterwards regarded as a true parliament. In this assembly, however, the question of Richard's title was brought forward, and the facts were stated to be as follows. The marriage of Edward IV. with Elizabeth Woodville had been invalid from the first. Not only had it been brought about by sorcery and witchcraft (this was gravely alleged in an Act of Parliament!) but at the very time it took place Edward was under a precontract to marry a certain Lady Eleanor Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury and widow of Lord Butler; and this according to the canon law made his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville void. Moreover, the Duke of Clarence had been attainted by Parliament, so that none of his children could inherit. Thus Richard was the only true heir of his father Richard Duke of York, and of the crown of England; and he was desired by the lords spiritual and temporal and the commons then assembled to assume that to which he was so entitled.

The crown is offered to Richard.

15. A deputation consisting of a number of the lords and some of the principal knights, joined by the mayor and aldermen and chief citizens of London, then waited on Richard at Baynard's Castle, the residence of his mother the Duchess of York, and presented the petition. Richard intimated his acceptance, and next morning, accompanied by a great number of the nobility, proceeded in state to Westminster Hall, and afterwards to the Abbey and St. Paul's. From that day he began to reign as king by the name of Richard III.

June 26.

CHAPTER X.

RICHARD III.

I. *The Royal Progress—Murder of the Princes.*

1. FROM what has been already said it will be seen that the accession, or, as it is commonly called, the usurpation of Richard III., was the result of a struggle between different parties among the nobility, in which the ablest and the most high-handed carried the day. Dislike of the Woodvilles was the one common bond by which the greater part of the nobles could be united; and Richard, with his ally the Duke of Buckingham, made use of it for his own purposes. But though this feeling was strong and general enough to give him a complete victory over his opponents, there was no real sympathy between him and the greater part of those who for the moment supported him, and it was inevitable that when he had attained the crown, feelings of a different kind should begin to show themselves. And so we are told expressly by one writer of the time that as soon as he had become king he lost the hearts of his nobility, 'insomuch that such as before loved and praised him and would have jeopardied life and goods with him if he had remained still as Protector, now murmured and grudged against him in such wise that few or none favoured his party, except it were for dread or for the great gifts that they received of him; by mean whereof he wan divers to follow his mind, the which after deceived him.' Yet, looking merely to the circumstances of his accession, Richard was not a usurper in the strict sense of the word. He did not seize, but was invited to assume, the crown: and the body by which he was invited so to do had all the weight and dignity of a regular parliament.

Change of feeling towards Richard after he had attained the crown.

2. His coronation, which was fixed for July 6, just ten days after his accession, was celebrated with peculiar magnificence, and preceded by a gorgeous procession the day before, in which the greater number of the nobility took part. At this time he made great professions that he would rule with clemency. A day or two before his coronation he entered the Court of King's Bench and sat down in the seat of the chief justice, from which he proclaimed a general amnesty for all offences against himself. In token of his sincerity he also sent for one Sir John Fogge, who had notoriously incurred his displeasure and taken refuge in a neighbouring sanctuary. Fogge had been a member of his brother King Edward's council, and had filled the office of treasurer of the household during his reign. On being sent for he came out of sanctuary, and Richard in the presence of all the people took him openly by the hand.

His coronation, July 6.

3. To confirm the good impression which these and other acts were calculated to make upon his subjects, Richard then set out upon a progress through the midland and northern counties. His course lay in the first place through Windsor, Reading, and Oxford, to Woodstock and Gloucester. At Oxford he met with a magnificent reception, in which Bishop Waynflete, the founder of Magdalen College, took a leading part. At Gloucester the city offered him a handsome present or 'benevolence,' unsolicited; and the same was done at Worcester, which was the next place he visited. Both these gifts he declined, as he had already done a similar offer from the metropolis, declaring he would rather have the hearts of his subjects than their money. He went on to Warwick, where he received ambassadors from Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; and from thence by Coventry, Leicester, and Nottingham he went on to York, where the citizens had prepared for him

He goes on a progress.

a reception of more than ordinary splendour. It has been said that he was crowned a second time in this city; but the truth seems to be merely that he and his queen, who had joined him at Warwick, with the Prince Edward their son, whom he that day created Prince of Wales, walked in a grand procession through the streets with crowns upon their heads.

4. All this display tended to increase his popularity, especially in the North where he had been a long time resident before he became king. But in London and the southern counties people began to be uneasy about his conduct towards the young princes his nephews. It is true King Edward himself, out of a confidence which was certainly misplaced, had appointed Richard the guardian of his children after his death, but the mode in which he exercised his rights was exceedingly suspicious. The two young princes were never seen out of the Tower, and nobody appears to have known anything about them. Their five sisters remained with their mother in the Sanctuary at Westminster; but Richard had caused the Sanctuary to be surrounded with a band of armed men lest any of them should make their escape beyond sea. For it appears that plans had begun to be formed for carrying off one or more of them in disguise; doubts being already entertained whether their two brothers would not be cut off by violence.

5. At length it was announced that even the Duke of Buckingham, who had hitherto been so strong a partizan of Richard, was interested in behalf of the young princes, and would put himself at the head of a confederacy for their liberation from the Tower. But scarcely had this news got abroad when it was made known that the object of the proposed rising was hopeless, for the princes were no more. No one could tell how or when they had been put to death; but that

Murder of the two princes.

they had been murdered was the current rumour of the time, and it was not, for it could not be, contradicted.

6. The circumstances of the crime seem, in fact, to have remained a secret for nearly twenty years; but at length by the confession of some of the murderers they were found to be, briefly, as follows:—Some time after Richard had set out upon his progress he sent a messenger named John Green to Sir Robert Brackenbury, the Constable of the Tower commanding him to put his two young nephews to death. This order Brackenbury would not obey, and Green returned to his master at Warwick. Richard was greatly mortified, but sent one Sir James Tyrell to London with a warrant to Brackenbury to deliver up to him for one night all the keys of the Tower. Tyrell thus took the place into his keeping, and engaged the services of Miles Forest, one of those who kept the princes' chamber, and John Dighton, his own groom, to carry out the wishes of the tyrant. These men entered the chamber when the two unfortunate lads were asleep and smothered them under pillows; then having called Sir James to see the bodies, buried them at the foot of a staircase. Brackenbury, it was supposed, caused them afterwards to be removed and buried secretly in some more suitable place; but as he was dead long before the story got abroad, the place could never be ascertained. The fact, however, appears to have been that they were not removed at all; for nearly two hundred years later, two skeletons corresponding to the age of the murdered youths were found in the very position where they were said to have been originally buried—at the foot of a staircase in the Tower.

Circumstances of the crime.

7. Unscrupulous as Richard was, the remorse that overtook him after this dreadful crime appears to have been very terrible indeed. 'I have heard,' wrote Sir Thomas More, 'by credible report

Richard's remorse.

of such as were secret with his chamberers, that after this abominable deed done he never had quiet in his mind; he never thought himself sure. When he went abroad his eyes whirled about, his body privily fenced, his hand ever on his dagger, his countenance and manner like one always ready to strike again. He took ill rest at nights, lay long waking and musing; sore wearied with care and watch, he rather slumbered than slept. Troubled with fearful dreams, suddenly sometimes started he up, lept out of his bed and ran about the chamber. So was his restless heart continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of his most abominable deed.'

II. *The Rebellion of Buckingham*

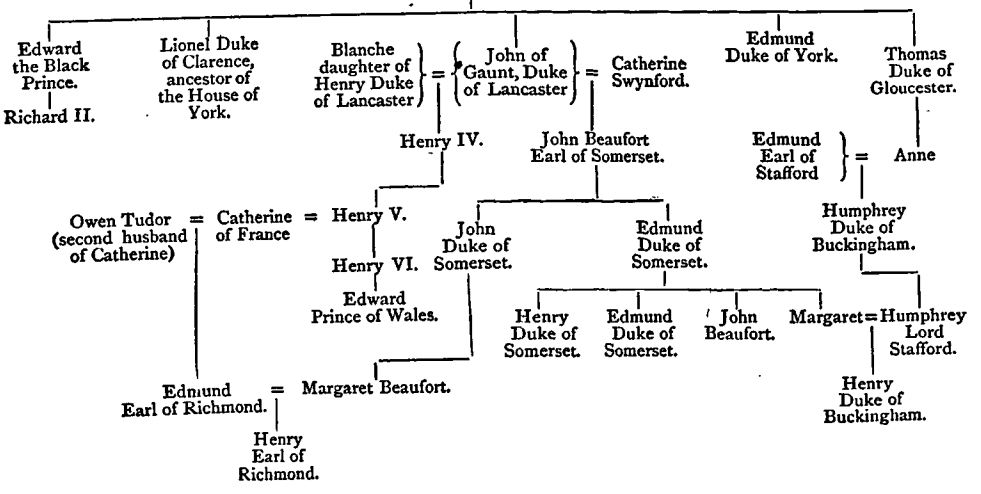
1. The news of the murder excited throughout the country strong feelings of grief and indignation. But to those implicated in the conspiracy for the liberation of the princes it was more especially alarming. A new object, however, was presently supplied to them. The male issue of Edward IV. being now extinct, a project was formed for marrying his eldest daughter Elizabeth to Henry Earl of Richmond, a refugee in Brittany, who was regarded as the head of the deposed House of Lancaster; and Buckingham wrote to the earl to cross the seas, while he and others in England should make an insurrection in his favour.

Projected marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Henry Earl of Richmond.

2. Now, it is true the direct male line of the House of Lancaster died with King Henry VI.; but this Earl of Richmond was descended from John of Gaunt through his mother Margaret Beaufort in the manner shown in the subjoined pedigree. He was also, by the father's side, a nephew of Henry VI.,

Descent of the Earl of Richmond.

HOUSE OF LANCASTER.



but this relationship, it will be seen, gave him no claim to the crown. On the other hand, his claim through the Beauforts was a little doubtful, as John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, the first of the line, was born before the marriage of his father John of Gaunt with his mother Catherine Swynford. The Beauforts, it is true, had been made legitimate by an Act of Parliament, but there was still some question whether they were not excluded from the crown. Richmond, however, was undoubtedly, after the death of Henry VI., the most direct representative of the line of John of Gaunt, and had been carried over to Brittany by his uncle the Earl of Pembroke, soon after the final overthrow of the Lancastrians at Tewkesbury.

3. Now it will be seen that the Duke of Buckingham was also descended from the Beauforts, and it is said that owing to this fact he had thought at one time of laying claim to the crown himself. It is also supposed that he had received a private disappointment from King Richard which had done much to cool the friendship he had hitherto entertained towards him. But he was further greatly influenced by some conversations that he held with Morton Bishop of Ely, whom Richard had delivered to his custody after his accession; and whom he kept as a prisoner at Brecknock. Morton very soon discovered his disaffection towards King Richard, and led him gradually into the design of calling over the Earl of Richmond from Brittany and marrying him to the Princess Elizabeth. This project was communicated to the Countess of Richmond, the earl's mother, and to the Queen Dowager, by both of whom it was warmly approved. The Marquis of Dorset and others of the Woodville party arranged with Buckingham a number of simultaneous risings to take place on October 18 in the south and west of England; and the Earl of Richmond

The Duke of Buckingham.

was expected at the same time to land on the southern coast and lead the movement in person.

4. On the day appointed, accordingly, the partisans of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, took up arms under different leaders in Kent, in Berkshire, at Salisbury, and at Exeter. The Duke of Buckingham also took the field that day at Brecknock. The King seems to have been nearly taken by surprise, but the news of the intended outbreak had reached him, a week before it took place, at Lincoln. He wrote in great haste to his chancellor to bring or send immediately the Great Seal in order that he might make out commissions of array. Hastening southwards he received it at Grantham on the 19th. Commissions were immediately sent out to levy troops in the King's name, and a singular proclamation was issued on the 23rd, endeavouring to excite public indignation against his opponents as men of immoral lives who, despising the general pardon issued by the King for political offences, were leagued together for the maintenance of vice and the indulgence of unlawful pleasures. The Marquis of Dorset, it seems, had, since the death of Hastings, taken Jane Shore into his keeping, and according to this proclamation had been guilty of many other acts of immorality. Outbreak of the Rebellion, Oct. 18.

5. Great rewards were offered by this proclamation for the capture of Buckingham, Dorset, and the Bishops of Ely and Salisbury; for Bishop Morton, it should be mentioned, after his conversations with Buckingham, had contrived to make his escape from Brecknock into the Isle of Ely, and soon after got beyond sea. The Bishop of Salisbury was a brother of Queen Elizabeth Woodville. One thousand pounds in money, or an estate in land worth one hundred pounds a year, was the price set upon the head of Buckingham. Such an amount was probably equal in value to about twelve thousand

pounds in modern money, or twelve hundred pounds a year in land. For the others the sums offered were not quite so large. Buckingham had boasted that he had as many liveries of the Stafford knot as Warwick the King-maker had of his cognisance, the bear and ragged staff. But however numerous the forces he could bring into the field, he was utterly unable to make use of them. Two gentlemen named Thomas Vaughan and Humphrey Stafford watched the roads about Brecknock to prevent his leaving Wales, and destroyed all the bridges across the Severn. Heavy rains then swelled the rivers and made a passage utterly impracticable. A great part of the land was flooded, provisions were not to be obtained, and the men of Buckingham disbanded. The duke himself retired into Shropshire and took refuge with one of his retainers named Ralph Banaster, who, tempted by the great reward offered for his apprehension, delivered him up to the sheriff of the county.

Buckingham betrayed,

6. Richard, meanwhile, had been collecting forces and advancing towards the west of England. Buckingham on his capture was brought to him at Salisbury, and the King gave orders for his instant execution. Richard acted wisely in refusing him an interview, for which he made urgent request; for it seems to have been well known afterwards that he intended to have stabbed him to the heart.

and executed, Nov. 2.

7. The capture and death of Buckingham completely put an end to the rebellion. Dorset and some of the other leaders at once abandoned all hope of resistance and fled to Brittany. A few others were taken and executed—among the rest Sir Thomas St. Leger, who had married the Duchess of Exeter, the King's sister; but the common people were spared. The Earl of Richmond set sail from Brittany

Collapse of the rebellion.

but met with a storm in mid-channel which dispersed his ships; and though his own vessel neared the coast at Poole and at Plymouth, he could obtain no satisfactory assurance of a friendly reception on landing. He therefore hoisted sail and recrossed the sea.

III. *Second Invasion of Richmond—Richard's Overthrow and Death.*

1. Thus Richard had obtained an almost bloodless triumph. He passed on to Exeter, where he received the congratulations of the citizens, and a purse of 200 gold nobles was presented to him. In the January following a Parliament met at Westminster which confirmed his title to the crown and passed an act of attainder against the Earl of Richmond and his adherents. Upwards of ninety persons were by this act branded as traitors and deprived of all their lands and honours; but the Countess of Richmond, Henry's mother, who had been the chief organiser of the whole rebellion, was treated with leniency out of consideration for her husband, Lord Stanley. Her lands were given to her husband for life, and he undertook to be responsible for her conduct in the future. Another Act of this Parliament was to abolish the oppressive kind of taxation introduced by Edward IV. under the name of benevolences, which though they were professedly free-will offerings, had been really exacted under so much pressure as to reduce many persons from affluence to poverty.

A.D. 1484. Richard's title confirmed in Parliament.

2. Before the Parliament separated the lords all took an oath of allegiance, not only to Richard as king, but to his son Edward Prince of Wales as heir-apparent, to whom they promised fealty after Richard's death. But within a few weeks the young prince died after a brief

illness, and Richard was childless. As the children of Edward IV. had been declared illegitimate and those of the Duke of Clarence could not inherit by reason of their father's attainder, Richard then recognised as his heir John De la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, son of the Duke of Suffolk.

3. Meanwhile, the Earl of Richmond was busy preparing for a second attempt at invasion. On Christmas Day he had held a meeting with his principal adherents in Rennes Cathedral, where he took oath to marry the Princess Elizabeth as soon as he should obtain possession of the crown. Richard made application to the Duke of Brittany to deliver him up into his hands; but the earl, having received warning, escaped into the dominions of Charles VIII., the new King of France, who had just succeeded his father Louis XI., where he was soon rejoined by about 300 of his followers. Richard, however, endeavoured to defeat his designs in another way. He summoned a council of the lords spiritual and temporal, then in London, together with the lord mayor and aldermen of the city, and took oath in their presence that if the five daughters of 'Dame Elizabeth Grey' (meaning by that name the Queen Dowager, whom he no longer recognised as such) would come out of sanctuary and place themselves under his protection, he would not only assure them of life and liberty, but provide them with husbands as they came of age, and give each of them a marriage portion of the value of 200 marks a year. He also engaged to allow Elizabeth herself a pension of 700 marks a year for life. This offer the Queen Dowager and her daughters thought it well to accept, and accordingly came out of sanctuary.

Richmond and his followers in Brittany.

A.D. 1484.

March 1.

The Queen Dowager and her daughters leave sanctuary.

4. It seems extraordinary that after the murder of her sons the Queen Dowager should ever have been induced to repose the slightest confidence in Richard; and yet there appears to be no doubt of the fact that some time after this she was nearly won over by his blandishments to break off her compact with Henry, whose cause she probably considered hopeless. She wrote to her son the Marquis of Dorset in France to withdraw himself from the Earl of Richmond's company; and Dorset had in consequence secretly left Paris, where the earl was then staying, and was hastening towards Flanders on his way to England, when the French king's council, at the earl's urgent request, caused his flight to be arrested. It is even asserted that Richard attained such favour with the Queen Dowager, that in order to prevent her daughter's marriage with the Earl of Richmond he proposed, in the expectation of his own queen's death, to marry her himself; and this project, as the chronicles relate, was actually approved by the mother, although very abhorrent to the feelings of the princess herself. Such a story seems almost too monstrous to be believed. Perhaps the truth may be that immediately after his queen's death Richard did make some advances of the kind, which even under these circumstances were disgraceful enough; and the indignation they aroused may have caused the story to be exaggerated. Certain it is that the King felt it necessary to make a public disavowal of the intention within a very few weeks after his wife's death.

A.D. 1485.

Richard disavows an intention to marry his niece.

5. But whatever arts Richard used—cajolery, promises, bribes, or threats—to turn enemies into friends or to defeat the plans of his opponents, they never were successful except partially and for a time. Sir Thomas More, a great wit and genius, who in those days was a child, but afterwards wrote a life of King Richard from the infor-

mation of persons then living, says of him that 'with large gifts he got him unsteadfast friendship, for which he was fain to pill and spoil in other places and get him steadfast hatred.' Before his brief reign came to an end he found himself obliged to replenish his empty exchequer by having recourse once more to those detested benevolences which he had promised in Parliament should never again be levied. Such measures, of course, made him more than ever unpopular at home, while the preparations of the Earl of Richmond abroad continually gave him more anxiety. The Earl of Oxford, who had given much trouble to his brother Edward IV., had been committed to the custody of Sir James Blount, governor of Hammes Castle, near Calais, brother of the Lord Mountjoy. Sir James released his prisoner, and both offered their services to the Earl of Richmond. The castle of Hammes was afterwards recovered into the King's hands, but only on condition that the garrison should be allowed to depart with bag and baggage.

He raises money by benevolences.

6. By repeated proclamations Richard called upon his subjects to resist the intended invasion of Richmond with all their force. He denounced the earl and his followers as men who had forsaken their true allegiance and put themselves in subjection to the French king. He pointed out that owing to the illegitimacy of the Beauforts Henry could have no claim to the crown, and that even on the father's side he was come of bastard blood. He declared that he had bargained to give up for ever all claims hitherto made by the kings of England either to the crown of France, the duchy of Normandy, Gascony, or even Calais. Richmond, however, had sent messages into England by which he was assured of a considerable amount of support; and he borrowed money from the King of France with which he fitted

Richmond embarks for Wales,

out a small fleet at Harfleur and embarked for Wales, where his uncle, Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, possessed great influence.

7. Richard, knowing of the intended invasion, but being uncertain where his enemy might land, had taken up his position in the centre of the kingdom. Following a plan first put in use by his brother Edward during the Scotch war, he had stationed messengers at intervals of twenty miles along all the principal roads to the coast to bring him early intelligence. But Henry landed at Milford Haven at the farthest extremity of South Wales, where, perhaps, Richard had least expected him; and so small was the force by which he was accompanied that the news did not at first give the King very much anxiety. He professed great satisfaction that his adversary was now coming to bring matters to the test of battle. The earl, however, was among friends from the moment he landed. Pembroke was his native town, and the inhabitants expressed their willingness to serve his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, as their natural and immediate lord. The very men whom Richard had placed to keep the country against him at once joined his party, and he passed on to Shrewsbury with little or no opposition.

and lands at Milford Haven, Aug. 1.

8. The King's 'unsteadfast friendships' on the other hand were now rapidly working his ruin. His own attorney-general, Morgan Kidwelly, had been in communication with the enemy before he landed. Richard, however, was very naturally suspicious of Lord Stanley, his rival's stepfather, who, though he was steward of the royal household, had asked leave shortly before the invasion to go home and visit his family in Lancashire. This the King granted only on condition that he would send his son, George Lord Strange, to him at Nottingham in his place. Lord

Richard betrayed by his friends.

Strange was accordingly sent to the King; but when the news arrived of Henry's landing, Richard desired the presence of his father also. Stanley pretended illness, an excuse which could not fail to increase the King's suspicions. His son at the same time made an attempt to escape, and being captured confessed that he himself and his uncle Sir William Stanley had formed a project with others to go over to the enemy; but he protested his father's innocence and assured the King that he would obey his summons. He was made to understand that his own life depended on his doing so, and he wrote a letter to his father accordingly.

9. Richard having mustered his followers at Nottingham went on to Leicester to meet his antagonist, and encamped at Bosworth on the night of August 21. The Earl of Richmond had arrived near the same place with an army of 5,000 men, which is supposed to have been not more than half that of the King. That day, however, Lord Stanley had come to the earl secretly at Atherstone to assure him of his support in the coming battle. He and his brother Sir William were each at the head of a force not far off, and were only temporising to save the life of his son Lord Strange. This information relieved Henry's mind of much anxiety, for at various times since he landed he had felt serious misgivings about the success of the enterprise. The issue was now to be decided on the following day.

10. Early in the morning both parties prepared for the battle. Richard arose before daybreak, much agitated, it is said, by dreadful dreams that had haunted his imagination in the night time. But he entered the field wearing his crown upon his head, and encouraged his troops with an eloquent harangue. There was, however, treason in his camp, and many of his followers were only seeking an opportunity

Aug. 22.

to desert and take part with the enemy. A warning indeed had been conveyed by an unknown hand to his foremost supporter, the Duke of Norfolk, in the following rhyme, which was discovered the night before, written on the door of his tent :—

'Jack of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon, thy master, is bought and sold.'

11. Lord Stanley, who had drawn up his men at about equal distance from both armies, received messages early in the morning from both leaders desiring his immediate assistance. His policy, however, was to stand aloof to the very last moment, and he replied in each case that he would come at a convenient opportunity. Dissatisfied with this answer, Richard ordered his son to be beheaded, but was persuaded to suspend the execution of the order till the day should be decided.

12. After a discharge of arrows on both sides the armies soon came to a hand-to-hand encounter. Lord Stanley joined the earl in the midst of the engagement, and the Earl of Northumberland, on whose support Richard had relied, stood still with all his followers and looked on. The day was going hard against the King. Norfolk fell in the thickest of the fight, and his son the Earl of Surrey, after fighting with great valour, was surrounded and taken prisoner. Richard endeavoured to single out his adversary, whose position on the field was pointed out to him. He suddenly rushed upon Henry's body-guard and unhorsed successively two of his attendants, one of whom, the earl's standard-bearer, fell dead to the ground. The earl himself was in great danger but that Sir William Stanley, who had hitherto abstained from joining the combat, now endeavoured to surround the King with his force of

The battle of Bosworth.

3,000 men. Richard perceived that he was betrayed, and crying out 'Treason! Treason!' endeavoured only to sell his life as dearly as possible. Overpowered by numbers he fell dead in the midst of his enemies.

Death of Richard.

13. The battered crown that had fallen from Richard's head was picked up upon the field of battle and Sir William Stanley placed it upon the head of the conqueror, who was saluted as king by his whole army. The body of Richard on the other hand was treated with a degree of indignity which expressed but too plainly the disgust excited in the minds of the people by his inhuman tyranny. It was stripped naked and thrown upon a horse, a halter being placed round the neck, and in that fashion carried into Leicester, where it was buried with little honour in the Grey Friars' church.

Henry crowned upon the battle-field.

14. Such was the end of the last King of England of the line of the Plantagenets. In warlike qualities he was not inferior to the best of his predecessors, but his rule was such as alienated the hearts of the greater part of his subjects and caused him to be remembered as a monster. In person, too, he is represented to have been deformed, with the right shoulder higher than the left; and he is traditionally regarded as a hunchback. But it may be that even his bodily defects were exaggerated after he was gone. Stories got abroad that he was born with teeth, and hair coming down to the shoulders, and that his birth was attended by other circumstances altogether repugnant to the order of nature. One fact that can hardly be a misstatement is that he was small of stature—which makes it all the more remarkable that in this last battle he overthrew in personal encounter a man of great size and strength named Sir John Cheyney. He was, in fact, a great soldier-king, in whom alike the valour and the

violence of his race had been matured and brought to a climax by civil wars and family dissensions.

15. It was inevitable that kings of this sort should give place to kings of a different stamp. His rival Henry, henceforth King Henry VII., inaugurated a new era, in which prudence and policy were made to serve the interests of peace, and secure the throne, even with a doubtful title, against the convulsions to which it had been hitherto exposed. By his marriage with the Princess Elizabeth he was considered to have at length united the Houses of York and Lancaster, and he left to his son Henry VIII., who succeeded him, a title almost as free from dispute or cavil as that of any king in more recent times.

16. The civil wars, in fact, had worked themselves out. The too powerful nobility had destroyed each other in these internecine struggles; and as the lords of each party were attainted by turns, their great estates were confiscated and passed into the hands of the crown. This gave the Tudor sovereigns an advantage that they knew well how to use. Watchful and suspicious of their nobility, they understood, as few other sovereigns did, the value of property; and under Henry VIII. the English monarchy attained a power and absolutism unparalleled before or since.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL VIEW OF EUROPEAN HISTORY.

1. THE civil wars in England of which we have now related the history are commonly called the Wars of the Roses, from the fact that the House of Lancaster assumed a red rose for its badge, and the House of York a white rose. Shakspeare, who has preserved in

Wars of the Roses.

his plays a number of historical traditions the authority of which we cannot always verify, represents in one interesting scene at the beginning of the struggle the lords of both parties meeting in the Temple Gardens, and each plucking a rose, red or white, to indicate his attachment to the Duke of Somerset or York. Whether such a scene actually took place and gave rise to those party badges it is impossible to say; but there is no doubt that the Yorkists were known as the party of the White Rose, and their opponents as that of the Red. When at length Henry VII., the representative of the House of Lancaster, attained the crown and married the daughter of Edward IV., the marriage was spoken of as the union of the Roses.

2. This union was the first step in England towards that strengthening of the powers of the crown which was now absolutely necessary for the restoration of order. Since the days of Edward III. all authority had been weak because the sovereign power itself was weak. It was the weakness of despotic caprice in Richard II., of usurpation and civil war under the House of Lancaster, and of internal division in the House of York; and all these causes combined to make the fifteenth century a period of violence and disorder approaching at times to anarchy. Under the steady rule of the Tudors England recovered from this confusion; the claims of the two rival houses were blended, the turbulent nobility were kept in strict subjection, law was administered with generally an impartial hand, peace was for the most part cherished, and commerce was protected. Disencumbered of the rule of any French territory except Calais, the English grew strong at home and became a nation compact and united under a race of sovereigns who were powerful enough to throw off the spiritual dominion of Rome, and

Under the Tudors England recovers from disorder.

to take a leading position among the potentates of Europe.

3. But that which occurred in England occurred in other countries also. What are called the Middle Ages came to an end with the fifteenth century—a time of universal disorder, in the midst of which, however, a new order was gradually forming itself and gathering strength. The decay of feudalism, in fact, paved the way for the reorganisation of Europe. Great kingdoms sprang up where formerly had existed a number of principalities held only in nominal subjection to a feudal sovereign, or where, as in England, a too powerful nobility had almost made themselves independent of the crown. France first emerged from the confusion; afterwards Spain and England. By the end of the fifteenth century the nations of western Europe had settled down into nearly the same relative positions and occupied nearly the same territory that they have since retained.

Great kingdoms forming in Europe.

4. The connection between English and Continental history during this period is a subject which has not been altogether lost sight of in the preceding pages. But some general remarks on the progress of European nations may be desirable before we bring this work to a conclusion.

5. There is at once a parallelism and a contrast during this period between the career of England and that of France. At no time were the fortunes of the two nations more closely linked together. The very same events form, during a considerable part of the fifteenth century, the leading features in the history of both. But the same events have in either case an opposite significance. The triumph of the one country was the abasement of the other, and the recovery of the second was

Close connection between English and French history.

accompanied by the demoralisation of the first. There is, moreover, quite an extraordinary amount of coincidence, and at the same time contrast, between the circumstances by which the contemporary kings of England and of France were surrounded during the whole period of our narrative. The reign of Charles VI., who came to the throne just three years after Richard II., corresponds to those of three successive kings in England. At his accession he and Richard were both under age; but Charles led his armies in person when he was fourteen, while Richard, though not deficient in courage, seldom asserted himself in any way except at a crisis like Wat Tyler's rebellion. The complaint in Richard's case was that he allowed himself to be governed by favourites; which was perfectly true at those times when he was not coerced by his uncles. Towards the end of his reign, however, Richard, weary of his long subjection, laid claim to absolute power; while Charles about the same time became deranged and was obliged to surrender the government to his uncles. After this the French court became divided by factions which left the kingdom an easy prey to the invader; and the same king who, when a boy, had alarmed all England by the fleet he had collected at Sluys, was obliged in his latter days to make an English king his heir and invest him with all the powers of royalty to the exclusion of his own son.

6. But the parallelism of which we have spoken is more striking after the death of Charles VI., when by a singular coincidence the reigns of the English and French sovereigns correspond during three successions exactly to a year, with circumstances either so much alike, or so contrasted, that they may be shown in parallel columns as follows :—

France.	*England.*
A.D. 1422. Charles VII. succeeds his father Charles VI., and	Henry VI. succeeds his father Henry V.
France loses an imbecile king and gets a stronger, who displays great abilities as a ruler. In his time—	England loses a strong king and gets an infant who exhibits no capacity for government even when he grows up. In his time—

France recovers Normandy and Guienne, and deprives England of all her French dominions, except Calais.

A.D. 1461. Louis XI. succeeds his father Charles VII., and	Edward IV. deposes Henry VI.
A politic king consolidates the French monarchy, notwithstanding powerful combinations against him.	A military king displaces one too weak to rule, but holds the throne insecurely, and is temporarily displaced himself.
A.D. 1483. Charles VIII. succeeds his father Louis XI., and	Edward V. succeeds his father Edward IV.
A minority; but France being now settled the consolidation of her dominions is completed in a few years by the annexation of Brittany.	A minority; but it does not last three months. Richard III. usurps the crown; but even his reign of tyranny and violence only lasts two years, and Henry VII., who succeeds him, is for a long time troubled with rebellions.

7. Of all the great feudal lords of France the Dukes of Burgundy were by far the most powerful. The duchy itself was one of the richest parts of France, but the Dukes also possessed Franche Comté — 'the Free County' of Burgundy, which they held of the Empire and not of the French crown; and to these possessions had been added, ever since 1384, some of the most flourishing

provinces of the Netherlands, which were acquired by Duke Philip the Bold in right of his wife, Margaret, daughter of the Count of Flanders. These provinces, full of populous towns such as Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp, seats of the largest commerce and manufactures in the world, were likewise held of the empire. Hence the Dukes of Burgundy became so exceedingly powerful, that instead of being subject to the kings of France, they at times held those kings in practical subjection to themselves. But after the death of Charles the Bold, Louis XI. seized upon the Duchy and even the Franche Comté, which he succeeded in uniting to the French crown. The rest of the dominions of the House of Burgundy were conveyed to the Archduke Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederic III. by his marriage with Charles the Bold's daughter; so that the Netherlands came into the possession of the House of Austria, an ambitious and grasping family, in whom the empire itself ultimately became hereditary, and with it under Charles V., in the sixteenth century, was joined the sovereignty of Spain.

8. The Spanish peninsula at the beginning of the fifteenth century was divided into the four Christian kingdoms of Castile, Arragon, Navarre, and Portugal, besides the Moorish kingdom of Granada. The different kings had wars among each other, and sometimes disputes with regard to the succession at home. But in 1458, John II., King of Navarre, succeeded to the crown of Arragon, and on his death in 1479 he was succeeded by his son Ferdinand, who with his wife Isabella, the heiress of Castile, had already been proclaimed joint sovereign of that country. In this manner, the three Christian kingdoms of Spain would have been united; but after the death of King John, Navarre became again a separate kingdom, and

Spain becomes by degrees a united kingdom.

owing to French interest was kept so for another century. Ferdinand and Isabella, however, united Arragon and Castile, turned their arms against the Moors, conquered Granada, and became masters of nearly the whole peninsula except Portugal. That country, which has maintained its independence to this day, became great in another way —by maritime expeditions. Alfonso V. made several descents upon the coast of Africa, conquered Ceuta, Tangier, and other places. Portuguese enterprise discovered the island of Madeira in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and afterwards the Azores; then gradually explored the western coast of Africa by Cape Bojador and Cape Verd, until, in 1497, Vasco de Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope and made his way to India. The discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492 was unquestionably stimulated by the knowledge of what the Portuguese had done before him.

Maritime enterprise of Portugal.

9. But while the western kingdoms all passed through a period of weakness and became stronger, the states situated in the centre of Europe remained in the old confusion, and in the East Christianity was actually receding before the armies of the Turk. Italy was parcelled out into small states. In the north there was the dukedom of Milan and the republics of Venice, Genoa, and Florence, besides some minor principalities. In the centre were the States of the Church, of which the Pope was sovereign. In the south were the two separate kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. The principalities in the north belonged to the empire, the centre of Italy was governed by the Church, the south was a bone of contention between foreign princes. Milan was erected into a dukedom by the Emperor Wenceslaus in 1395. It had long been under the dominion of the Visconti, who then be-

Divided state of Italy.

Milan.

came its dukes—a family noted for deeds of violence and cruelty. But on the death of Philip Maria Visconti in 1445 the dukedom was claimed by his son-in-law Francesco Sforza, who, after some fighting obtained it, and became the head of another line. This Francesco, who was the most noted soldier of his day, had fought by turns in the service of Visconti, the Pope, and the Venetians, and, generally speaking, had taken part in all the Italian wars of his time, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the opposite. He had fought against Pope Eugenius IV. in the name of the Council of Bâle till the prudent pontiff turned him into a friend by making him gonfalonier, or standard-bearer of the Church. He had been out of favour with the Duke of Milan, but the duke found the need of his assistance, appointed him captain-general of his army, and gave him his daughter in marriage. After the duke's death the Milanese wished to form themselves into a republic like several of the neighbouring states; but Sforza formed a league with his old enemies the Venetians, laid siege to the city, and forced it to surrender for fear of starvation. He was then proclaimed duke, and his alliance was sought, not only by the princes of Italy, but by Louis XI. of France and by the King of Arragon. His sons and grandsons were dukes after him, but scarcely sustained his greatness, and in the last year of the century the Duke Ludovico Maria Sforza was taken prisoner and his duchy seized by Louis XII. of France.

10. In Naples, as we have seen, the House of Anjou disputed the throne for some time with the family of Durazzo. Afterwards the Kings of Arragon, who ruled in Sicily, laid claim to Naples also, and the House of Anjou was unable to vindicate its pretensions against them. King René at first attempted to make good his claims, but was soon driven out and left

Naples.

with a barren title. A bastard branch of the royal family of Arragon then for some time succeeded, but in the end this kingdom, as well as Sicily, came into the hands of Ferdinand the Catholic. Thus ultimately the greater part of Italy fell under the power either of France or Spain, and so it continued for a long time afterwards.

11. The two maritime republics of Genoa and Venice did little to avert this result. The former, a prey to civil dissensions, submitted, in the end of the fourteenth century, to France, and never completely regained its independence till 1528. Its territory on the mainland was but a narrow fringe along the coast, but it possessed the island of Corsica, and in the Grecian Archipelago the island of Scio. It had also made Cyprus tributary and colonised the Crimea and other settlements on the Black Sea. But the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which the Genoese, of all European powers, made the greatest efforts to prevent, deprived them of their colonies on the Black Sea and thereby crippled their commerce. Their rivals the Venetians also suffered from the advance of the Turks in Greece and on the shores of the Adriatic. Venice, however, did not succumb, as Genoa did, to any other great European power, and she was so formidable in the year 1508 that France, Spain, and Germany combined together in the league of Cambray to humble her.

Genoa.

Venice.

12. Of the history of the Popes we have already said so much that a very few words may suffice to complete it. We have seen how even after the papal see was brought back from Avignon to Rome the French party were strong enough to maintain a series of Antipopes at Avignon until the schism was terminated by the proceedings of the Council of Constance. But

The Popes.

factions prevailed at Rome, and Pope Eugenius IV. took part with the Orsini family against the Colonnas. He also came into collision with the Council of Bâle, which was assembled in 1431 to promote a union of the Greek Church with the Roman. Eugenius sought to dissolve this council, but the council, maintaining the principle asserted by the previous council of Constance, declared itself superior to the Pope and ultimately deposed him and set up Amadeus Duke of Savoy in his place as Pope Felix V. Eugenius, however, convoked another council at Ferrara, which he afterwards removed to Florence, and therein pronounced the council of Bâle heretical and the Antipope Felix a schismatic. Felix, indeed, was only recognised in Hungary and a few of the minor European states, and after the death of Eugenius he was persuaded to resign. After this there is little that is remarkable in the history of the papacy for some time, except that in 1458 a great scholar and traveller, Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, was made Pope by the name of Pius II., who, like all the other popes of this period made great but ineffectual efforts to unite Europe against the Turks. The princes of Europe were engrossed with their own affairs, and the authority of the Holy See was no longer what it had been before the popes took up their abode at Avignon.

The Turks.

13. We have already spoken of the conquests of the Sultan Bajazet, of the great battle of Nicopolis in which he defeated the flower of European chivalry, and of his final overthrow by Timour the Tartar. This saved for a while from extinction the old Eastern Empire, which had continued from the days of Constantine, and Solyman I., the son of Bajazet, recovered the greater part of Asia from Tamerlane by ceding to the Emperor Manuel the conquests of his father in Europe. But his successors renewed their

aggressions on Christendom, which would have been still more effective but for family quarrels among the Ottoman princes themselves. The armies of Amurath II. were defeated when they invaded Hungary by Johannes Corvinus Hunniades, Waywode of Transylvania. The Prince of Albania at the same time threw off the yoke and succeeded in maintaining for three and twenty years the independence of his country. The name of this prince was George Castriot, but he is better known in history by that of Scanderbeg—meaning in Turkish the Great Alexander—which was given him in compliment to his military genius. He certainly did not a little while he lived to divert the forces of the Turk from Europe generally. Yet in the year 1453 Mahomet II. took by assault Constantinople, and the Eastern Empire came to an end. In a few years more he took Athens, Thebes, and Corinth, and conquered the Morea. Finally, after the death of Scanderbeg he made himself master of Albania and Negropont, invaded Croatia, and sent a fleet across the Adriatic which surprised Otranto. Italy and Europe generally heard of his doings with terror.

14. Of all European kingdoms Hungary was most exposed to this invader, and Hungary had not unfrequently troubles of its own, in the nature of a disputed succession, to encourage his audacity. The crowns of Hungary and of Bohemia were united with the Empire of Germany under Sigismund, of whose contests both with the Turks and with the Hussites we have already spoken; but a party in each of these countries sought rather to promote a union with Poland. After the death of Sigismund, Albert of Austria, who had married his daughter Elizabeth, succeeded to the throne of both kingdoms and became emperor as well; but he died within two years. At the moment of his death he was without an heir, but his queen, Elizabeth, was with

Hungary and Bohemia.

child and gave birth to a son who was called Ladislaus the Posthumous, and succeeded to the throne of Bohemia. The Hungarians, however, offered their crown to another Ladislaus, the King of Poland, with whom Elizabeth, so long as she lived, in vain attempted to dispute the succession on her son's behalf. Under this Polish king and the brave general John Hunniades, the Hungarians succeeded for some time in repelling the Turks; but being incited by the Pope to violate a truce with the enemy, the King met with a great defeat, and perished in battle near Varna. After his death Hunniades was made Regent for Ladislaus the Posthumous, who was still a minor, and invaded the dominions of the Emperor Frederic III. to make him deliver up the young prince who had been placed under his protection. Young Ladislaus was restored, but those by whom he was surrounded caused Hunniades to be dismissed from the regency, and some years after goaded the hero's sons into a conspiracy which cost the eldest his life. The people, however, were indignant, and on the death of Ladislaus raised Mathias Corvinus, the second son of Hunniades, to the throne. Like his father, he was a brave warrior, and he regained from the Turks the strong town of Jaicza in Bosnia. But unfortunately the Turks were not his only enemy, and he was compelled to make war by turns against the King of Bohemia, the King of Poland, and the Emperor; and although a king of very noble qualities and very successful in all his campaigns, it was perhaps a happiness for his country that he left no son to continue his line in the face of so many adversaries. The crown of Hungary was again united with that of Bohemia, and in the following century both crowns came to the House of Austria.

15. The kingdom of Poland had long been exposed to attack from another set of infidels—the hordes inhabiting

Lithuania. But in 1386, the Princess Hedwig having succeeded to the crown, took for her husband Jagellon, Grand Duke of Lithuania, on condition that he would be baptized. This act was followed by the conversion of the Lithuanians generally. Jagellon became King of Poland by the name of Ladislaus V., and the country was no longer exposed to pagan inroads; but he and his successors had fierce wars with the Teutonic knights of Prussia. Poland.

16. Germany had been for centuries under the rule of the emperors—successors of Charlemagne, who was considered to have revived the old empire of Rome. Theoretically, the Emperor was in temporal matters what the Pope was in spiritual—the head of all western Europe, or rather of the world. But these proud pretensions had never been justified by facts since the days of Charlemagne himself. For a long time the empire had been united with the old kingdom of Germany, and the Emperor had been elected by a diet of German princes. He commonly received three crowns in succession—first a silver crown at Aix-la-Chapelle, which was the crown of Germany; afterwards what is called the iron crown of Lombardy at Milan (it is of silver but has a circle of iron within it); and finally the golden crown of empire at Rome. This last crown was placed upon his head by the Pope, and until he received it he was not fully entitled to the name of emperor. Till then he was only called King of the Romans. For a long time the emperors had asserted their dominion over Italy, but now this was little more than a tradition. Even over Germany their rule was no longer what it had once been. The revenues attached to the imperial dignity were totally inadequate, and the electors were fain to offer it to foreign princes able to support the burden. The German princes cared little for The German Empire.

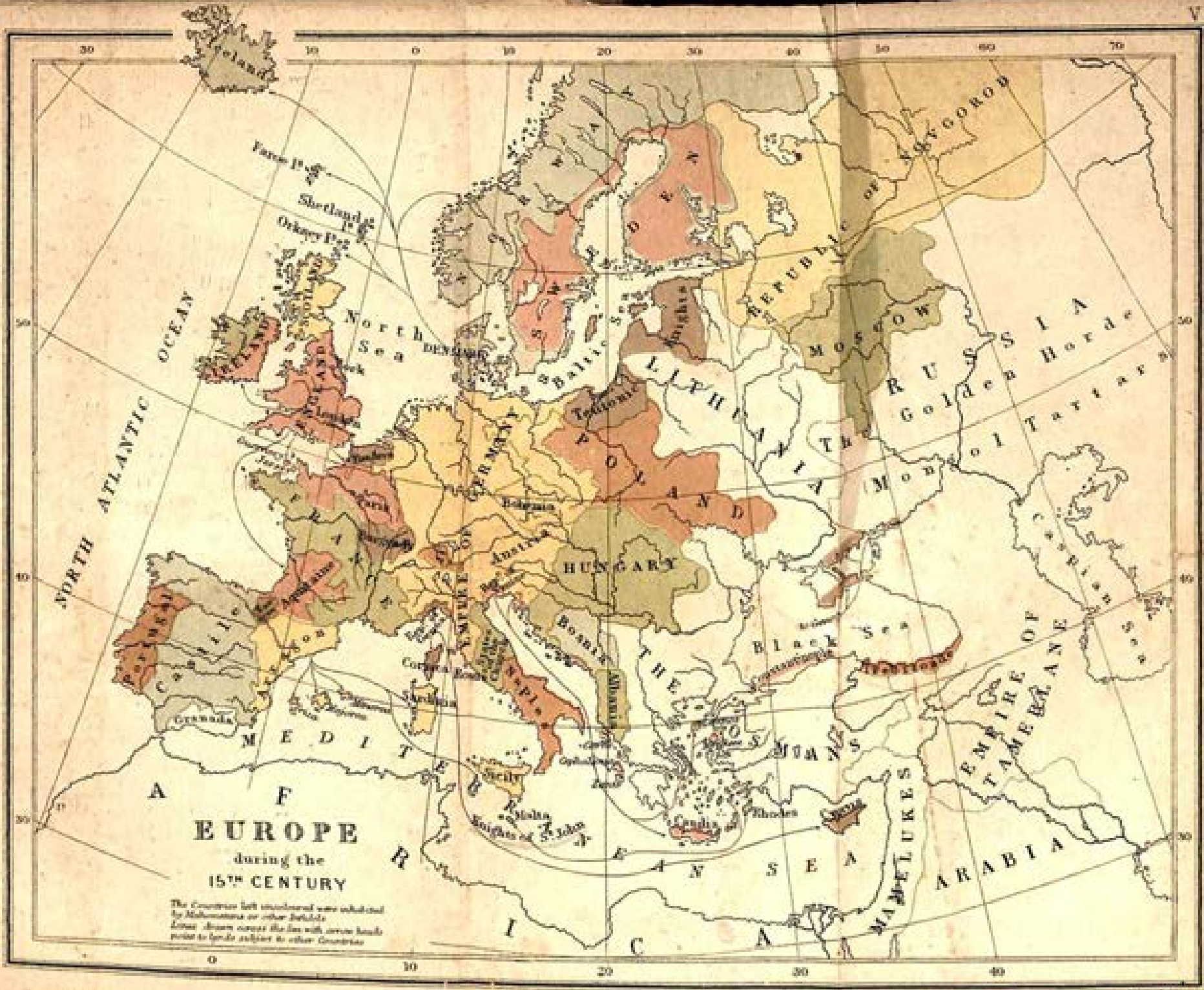
their sovereign ; and the Emperor himself cared more for his own patrimony than for the interests of Germany. Wenceslaus, who was King of Bohemia as well as Emperor, seldom visited the rest of his dominions, and was deposed in 1400, the year after his brother-in-law Richard II. was deposed in England. Sigismund, the brother of Wenceslaus, was a more active ruler, but even he cared more for Hungary than for Germany. Still more indifferent to the affairs of the empire was Frederic III., who was elected Emperor in 1440, and who made it his principal aim to advance the interests of the House of Austria. He created the duchy of Austria into an archduchy, married his son Maximilian to Mary, the rich heiress of Burgundy, and got him elected King of the Romans during his own lifetime, so as to ensure his succession to the empire after his death. The policy which he thus initiated was continued by Maximilian and his other descendants. The empire was preserved in the possession of the family, and the fortunes of the House of Austria were continually improved by politic marriages. But Germany became more and more disunited, each of her princes being virtually supreme in his own dominions.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

1. THE fifteenth century was not an age of really great men. Amid schisms in the Church, wars, rebellions, and disputed successions in every kingdom of Europe, it seems to have been impossible for any mind to realise to itself one grand idea, to work out one great work, or to set forth one great thought. The best minds of the age looked back upon

The fifteenth century not an age of great men.


Iceland
Faroe Ps
Shetland Ps
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NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
North Sea
Baltic Sea
IRELAND
ENGLAND
Edinburgh
London
Dublin
Rochester
Canterbury
Norwich
Yarmouth
Hull
York
Lincoln
Chester
Worcester
Oxford
Gloucester
Bristol
Exeter
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Southampton
Salisbury
Winchester
Reading
Canterbury
Dover
Rye
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Lewes
Arundel
Chichester
Guildford
Kingston
Windsor
Oxford
Cambridge
Ely
Lincoln
Boston
Nottingham
Derby
Leicester
Coventry
Warwick
Stafford
Shrewsbury
Ludlow
Hereford
Gloucester
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Bristol
Exeter
Plymouth
Launceston
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Rochester
Maidstone
Guildford
Kingston
Windsor
Reading

the past and regretted the chivalry that was passing away. Order was the one great need of the time, and as yet men could see no order except of a kind already past recovery, which they were vainly endeavouring to restore. So for the peace of the Church they burned heretics and put witches to open penance, while, adhering to the traditions of a moribund chivalry, they plunged Europe into war and anarchy. The one direction in which there was a visible movement in men's minds was in a revival of ancient learning. Scholars were recovering lost literature to the world, and the classic writers of ancient Rome were studied and imitated in a way they had not been before. Greek, too, began to engage more attention in Europe after the fall of Constantinople; for refugees carried the language and the literature into Italy and elsewhere. The art of printing, first used in Germany about the year 1440, and brought into England by Caxton in 1474, helped to multiply copies of the best ancient authors.

Revival of letters.

2. In England, after the days of Gower and Chaucer we had very little literature that deserved the name. The principal poet of the succeeding age was John Lydgate, a monk of Bury, whose small lyric effusions, though not altogether contemptible, scarcely rank above mediocrity. It is remarkable, however, that two foreign princes—James I. of Scotland and Charles Duke of Orleans—each of whom was for many years detained a prisoner in England, each contributed to his native literature poetry that was far from commonplace.

Lydgate.

James I. and Charles Duke of Orleans.

3. In religion men testified what was going on beneath the surface rather by acts than by words. Men who felt more deeply than their neighbours some neglected phase of Christianity drifted away from the authority of the Church. There were the

Religion.

Flagellants in Italy, the Lollards in England, the Hussites in Bohemia. But their zeal was found to be incompatible even with civil peace, and they were met by a spirit of persecution, in which it is to be lamented that some of the noblest minds of the day concurred. Such was John Gerson at the Council of Constance, —the man who in defiance of danger tore to rags all the miserable special pleadings by which the creatures of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, sought to justify or extenuate the murder of his rival Orleans,— even he, so bold and upright in defence of public morals, took the lead in the persecution of Huss and Jerome of Prague. A quieter mind was that of Thomas à Kempis, to whom, as it is generally believed, the world is indebted for the exquisitely beautiful book, still so popular, upon the Imitation of Christ. Nothing can excel it as an exposition of that pure and peaceful devotion for which monasticism still offered a safe asylum amid the perverseness and errors of the time. Outside the cloister zeal was sure to be persecuted, even if it endeavoured to vindicate authority. Such was the fate of Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, a man not less remarkable for his vigour of intellect than for his love of toleration, who wrote a number of treatises in English in defence of the Church against the Lollards. His object was to win over heretics by reason instead of by the fires of persecution. His arguments generally are remarkably clear and lucid, tending to show that the Lollard position was founded upon an undue deference to the mere letter of Scripture, and that the Bible was not given us to supersede the use of our natural reason. But this mode of treatment satisfied no one. During the short lull in the civil war in 1457—not long before the procession of the reconciled leaders to St. Paul's— Bishop Pecock was accused of heresy, forced to recant

Gerson.

Thomas à Kempis.

Reginald Pecock.

for fear of martyrdom, and deprived of his bishopric. The Church declined to be defended in the spirit of toleration.

4. Thus whatever was noble was distressed and persecuted. Commerce and money-getting went on, and the spirits of men, broken by invariable disappointment when they attempted anything higher, became generally sordid and mercenary. Kings grasped at territory instead of money, but in England they soonest tired of the game, and even they, in the end, joined in the general pursuit of wealth in preference to honour or reputation. Edward IV. first set the example of 'trafficking in war' which Lord Bacon notes as a feature of the policy of Henry VII. Both these kings raised great supplies from their own subjects, and then accepted money from the enemy to forbear fighting.

Commerce alone goes on uninterrupted.

Kings traffic in war.

5. But from the commercial enterprise of the day arose those discoveries which in the end, perhaps, had most influence in the formation of a new era. New coasts, new seas, new islands, and in the end a complete New World, were successively revealed. The thoughts of men were expanded, their imaginations fired with new ideas. Old philosophies insensibly passed away as the ambition, the enterprise, and the avarice of a new generation found channels which had been hitherto unknown. The world, even the material world, was found to be much larger than had been supposed. As for the world unseen, was it likely that popes and councils had taken the true measure of that?

New discoveries lead to a new era.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

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